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THE

WARD OF DELAMERE.

A TALE.

THE

WARD OF DELAMERE,

A Tale.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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BY MRS. PINCHARD,

Author of "Mystery and Confidence, the Blind Child, &c."

Inscribed, by Permission, to

MRS. G. A. ROBINSON.

"Then gently scan your brother man,
"Still gentler sister woman,
"Though they may gang a kennin wrang,
"To step aside is human;
"One point must still be greatly dark;
"The moving, *why* they do it,
"And just as lamely can we mark
"How far, perhaps, they rue it:
"Who made the heart, 'tis he alone
"Decidedly can try us;
"He knows each chord, its various tone;
"Each spring, its various bias;
"Then at the balance lets be mute,
"We never can adjust it;
"What's *done* we partly may compute,
"But know not what's *resisted*."—BURNS.

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THE

WARD OF DELAMERE.

CHAP. I.

ALL around them was dark and silent as the grave, except the low moan of stifled fear and pain, which proceeded from Mrs. Dennis. Magdalena, afraid to call, since if heard she knew not how to account for the extraordinary situation in which they would be found, cautiously descended half a dozen steps, at the foot of which she found Mrs. Dennis extended. "Are you hurt?" she whispered. "Oh yes," answered Mrs. Dennis, "I have bruised my arm very much, and I fear strained my ancle also!" "Rise, if possible," said Magdalena; "let me assist in raising you; can you guess

where we are?" "Oh no!" replied Mrs. Dennis, "I have mistaken my way evidently; I suppose there is another door which in the dark I have missed; but where we now are I cannot guess, there are so many strange places in this old castle!"

She now rose with difficulty, and sat down upon the steps, which Magdalena discovered by the touch were of marble: the place, whatever it was, felt damp and cold. She now proposed to go back for the lamp they had seen, by which means they would more easily explore the way to their own apartments. "I would have taken it before," said Mrs. Dennis, "but feared the servants would miss it." "We must not regard that," answered Magdalena; "I will fetch it."

She now with silent steps reascended the stairs, and, guided by the dim light of the distant lamp, soon arrived at the place where it stood; whence, gliding as quickly as possible, she re-

turned to the open door within which she had left Mrs. Dennis. But O! how did the trembling frames of both recoil, when they perceived they were in an inclosed space attached to the chapel, and which they knew was the burial-place of the Delamere family! From the chapel a light railing only divided it, and often had Magdalena's eyes dwelt upon the indistinct tombs she could discern from the opposite gallery, where on Sundays she sat with Lord Ennersdale.

Those solemn, those awful objects now broke distinctly on her sight: pale statues of the dead, and marble monuments defaced by age and damp, surrounded them on every side; while over their heads half decayed banners, placed in commemoration of some warrior now forgotten in the dust, waved in the breeze of night. To the stronger mind of Magdalena, opprest by grief and almost wishing to repose for ever, beneath those silent monuments, the

scene was rather soothing than terrific, but Mrs. Dennis shrunk with horror from the sight, and as the light flashed faintly on the marble effigy of some being long since mouldered in the grave, her startled fancy converted it into a tremendous spectre, coming perhaps to punish her for sharing, without revealing, the secrets of her youthful charge.

"Oh, let us hasten hence!" she cried; "Oh, Magdalena, lead me away before I die with fright and apprehension!"—But Magdalena's eyes and heart were rivetted upon an object she had just discovered. Amongst the old and decaying tombs which rose around her one monument of fine white marble, stood conspicuous.

It was of an oblong form, and its ornaments were classical and appropriate. Magdalena, hastily approached it, regardless of Mrs. Dennis's entreaties, that she would leave that dismal place, and by the pale light of

the lamp she read the following inscription.

Sacred to the Memory
of
HORATIA,
The only daughter
of
Hugh Marmaduke Delamere, Esq.
of
Delamere Castle, in the County of Cumberland,
and
Of Rossglen Abbey, in Berwickshire.
She died
May the 12th 17——
Aged nineteen.
For eighteen years, lovely in person, excellent
in mind, and admirable in conduct, she
was the delight of her friends,
the pride and blessing
of her Father,
But, alas!
By yielding to the dictates of passion,
She became a wretched victim to the consequences of
DISOBEDIENCE.
Reader,
If a Parent, mourn for a Father robbed of every
hope by her decease. If young and fair,
warned by her untimely fate,
Be OBEDIENT and be HAPPY.

Scarcely had Magdalena glanced her eyes over this inscription, when falling on her knees, she exclaimed "Oh this is the hand of heaven!—*Mother*, dear *Mother!*—hear thy wretched child!—From the tomb thou speakest to me!—Yes!---I will hear the awful warning——I will be *obedient*—but oh!"—and overcome by the variety of emotions she had undergone, she fell exhausted and fainting on the cold stone that covered the remains of her mother.

Vainly now would prudence or discretion have imposed silence on Mrs. Dennis: the lamp in Magdalena's fall had been extinguished, and speedily as the agitation of her mind broke through the heavy faintness which hung about her, yet even in that short interval, the screams of Mrs. Dennis, sounding wildly through that silent cell, and the long passage that led to it, had roused the attention of the servants, and three or four of the most courageous, with Agnes at their head,

had rushed from the servants'-hall, and, guided by the sound, approached the burial place; still calling for help, and vainly trying to raise the half-dead Magdalena, Mrs. Dennis soon assembled them around her. The surprize, the consternation they felt at finding her and their young lady, at such an hour, and in such a place, may well be conjectured: overwhelming her with questions she knew not how to answer, they approached the terrified Magdalena. "For heaven's sake, my dear young lady," exclaimed Agnes, as she assisted to raise her "how came you here!---In this sad place!---Well, too well might your tender spirits be overcome!" "Oh, Agnes" sighed Magdalena, sinking on her shoulder, "lead me hence!—Lead me; yet lead me not; once more let me kneel, once more invoke my mother's shade to bless me and to sanctify my purpose!" Again she dropped on her knees before the

cold insensible marble, pressing it with her lips and shedding torrents of tears upon its polished surface; while Agnes, shaking off the trammels which had for so many years constrained her actions, knelt by her, weeping, and exclaimed, though in a low voice "Oh yes, she was your mother, your lovely and beloved mother; fair as an angel, and as an angel pure; except, oh! except that her heart would not be directed by her father's will! She rebelled against his power; she grieved, she almost destroyed him! But oh, sadly was she punished, dearly did she repent! Be warned, dear young lady, by her fate; read once more this sad inscription,

'Be obedient and be happy.'

Sobs choaked her utterance and almost convulsed the tender frame of Magdalena.

"Happy!" she repeated, raising her arms with frenzied earnestness "oh

never! never! Yet I will be obedient! dearest, sainted mother! my heart promises!"——

Meanwhile the other servants had been wondering amongst themselves, and tormenting Mrs. Dennis, to know how she happened to be there. "Through a door too," said Judith "that never is opened except when some of the family is buried, and then only just to admit the grave-diggers and workmen! How in the world came it to be opened?"

"That" said Joseph "is easily answered; the rust and time have destroyed the lock; see, it has fallen nearly off. How Mrs. Dennis and my young lady came here at this time in the evening, I know not." "Why then," said Mrs. Dennis, recovering herself a little "I will tell you; my young lady walked farther than she intended, and finding it grow dark, I went to meet her, and when we came back the great doors were fastened, so we came through the back passage, and I took

his for the door that leads to our staircase; I fell down these steps in the dark, Miss went to fetch a lamp we had passed, and when she returned, tired with walking, and the unexpected sight of this dismal place, she fainted away."

"No wonder I'm sure" said Judith; "Lord what a mercy it was you did not *see any thing* when Miss left you all alone in the dark!"

The short explanation Mrs. Dennis had given, satisfied the servants tolerably well, or, if they had any doubts they all loved her and Magdalena too well to express them; after attending them therefore to their apartment, they left them to themselves, and Magdalena, without undressing, threw herself upon her bed, nor could all Mrs. Dennis's entreaties prevail on her to rise or take off her cloaths. Her brain seemed to burn, her heart seemed bursting, and she spent the night in tears and prayers. Earnestly she prayed, for consolation, for support, for direction. By degrees,

calmed by her pious aspirations, she became more composed, and when Mrs. Dennis reminded her of the interview she was to have at noon with Lord Ennersdale, she at length consented to go to bed, where short uneasy slumbers in some degree prepared her for the painful scene she hardly felt strength to encounter.

At length the dreaded hour arrived, and arming herself with all the resolution in her power, Magdalena went to attend Lord Ennersdale. Her cheek was pale, her eye dim, and her brow contracted; every muscle and lineament of that face lately so serene and smiling, seemed shrunk with the intense mental pain she endured. Her very form seemed changed; already she appeared thinner, and her fair head, drooping on her overcharged bosom, took something from her stature. No tear, no sigh marked her sorrow; she would not yield to either; if once she ventured to express her grief, she knew

the bursting torrent would overwhelm her.

"Yet," she mentally exclaimed, "yet Montaubrey, to thee my promise shall be sacred. Can there be that torture prepared for me which can induce me to renounce it!"

Ah, Magdalena! Thou wert *within the magic circle!*—As she entered the room Lord Ennersdale's majestic figure met her eye. He sat in his usual great chair, with the little table designed in the picture of her mother before him. On it stood a small cabinet of curious workmanship; he leant his arm upon the table, and his piercing eyes rested on Magdalena. But Magdalena did not now shrink and tremble; the resolution of deep grief was in her heart; she thought she knew the worst, and was prepared for all! As he gazed on her, he seemed surprized at the alteration, at the cold and almost rigid composure of her countenance; her complexion, late so variable, had as-

sumed a marble hue, her eyes, which used to veil themselves in their long lashes when they met his, or to raise themselves to his face, either swimming in tears or full of smiling sweetness, according to the sentiment which inspired them, now, wild, and full of strange expression, met his glance undismayed.

For an instant he paused, and seemed to seek within himself an explanation of her unusual looks. Then in a composed but solemn tone he said "Approach, Magdalena, and sit down, for I have much to say to you."

She obeyed in silence, and he spoke as follows: "The time is come, Magdalena, when all that has seemed mysterious in your situation must be cleared away. Of late, I am aware, that mystery has been more apparent, more galling to you: the veil which concealed from you many circumstances perhaps unlike the condition of others of your age, has been removed. By what hand

you best know! You have suddenly learnt to consider yourself *solitary*, and to fancy that you *wanted a companion*; how you got at this knowledge I will not now enquire; doubtless, you fancy from a *friendly* instructor; so thought Eve when she ate of the apple which taught her to distinguish good from evil! I wave however this discussion; it has nothing to do with our present subject.

"Magdalena, I had a daughter—I loved her: I confided in her. She was lovely, she was admirable; beautiful in person, rich in acquirement. For eighteen years she was the soul of my existence! The only object which rendered life desirable. Whatever she wished she commanded; whatever wealth could purchase lay at her feet.

"She was affianced, and, as it seemed, with her own consent, to the only human being I ever thought worthy of her! If ever man were perfect, Sir Eustace Willoughby was the man. In

infancy and early youth he called, and loved her as a sister; at a more advanced age he demanded a still dearer name.

"My daughter and myself lived alternately at Ross-glen Abbey, in Berwickshire, and in this castle; sometimes, however, we visited London, and sometimes Edinburgh, where I had many connections, the mother of Horatia having been a Scots-woman: she died at early age; she was happily taken from the "*evil to come*."—This place was my favourite residence, because my chosen son, the lover of Horatia lived near it: you have seen his house; it is called, as I believe you heard, West-hay.

Horatia's youth alone delayed their union; I did not wish her to marry while yet a child, and Eustace consented, however reluctantly, at my request, to wait for her another year. When she was about seventeen, she contracted a *sudden*, a *romantic* friendship with

a young lady who lived near us at Ross-glen Abbey; they were much together, and pleased with all that gave pleasure to Horatia, I loved to see her with the sprightly Emily. I was nót then, Magdalena, what you have ever known me,—silent, stern, perhaps you think—perhaps you have had reason to think, harsh and severe! I could then enjoy the pleasures of society; I loved those festive circles of which Horatia shone the brightest ornament! I will not however expatiate; let me compress my story into the smallest compass. To you it will be painful, to me it *has been agonizing!* But that is over! I no longer feel any thing!"

Yet as he spoke, his pale cheek, his quivering lip and heaving bosom, gave testimony, that whatever he might himself believe, feeling was not extinguished in his heart.

He went on.

"Soon, very soon after the commencement of my daughter's connec-

tion with her new friend, her manners altered, her whole conduct changed; she became grave, silent, and abstracted, and, when she thought herself unobserved, was frequently in tears. To Eustace she grew cold and distant, and when the ingenuous youth, solicited, with the affection of a brother, with the tenderness of a lover, to be admitted to her confidence, sighs and ill-concealed tears were her only reply. With a mixture of grief and resentment, Eustace now looked around the circle we frequented for the cause of Horatia's uneasiness, nor was he long ere he suspected the truth. Emily had a relation, who for some weeks had been on a visit at her father's house; he was a young man of a person singularly fine, of elegant manners, and indeed a superior and cultivated mind; he had just quitted college, and was designed by his friends to study the law, for he inherited scarcely any thing from his parents, who were dead. This young

man was acceptable as a companion for us all, we were all ready to admit that he possessed uncommon powers of pleasing; and had not I believed Horatia's heart engaged, I might perhaps on her account have feared him. But, in what was he superior to our excellent, to our admirable Eustace?—Strange! That a momentary, and capricious fancy should overcome the remembrance of years of sincere affection, of a thousand proofs of virtue! Such however was the effect of romantic passion in the bosom of Horatia, aided by the encouragement and counsels of an injudicious friend. Eustace now came of age, and was called by unavoidable business relative to his estates, into one of the southern counties of England; his long minority and other circumstances had rendered the accounts of his guardians somewhat tedious; he was also to be present at his sister's wedding, who was two or three years older than himself;

he therefore expected to be detained from us three months, at the expiration of which time it was settled, his marriage with Horatia was to take place at Delamere Castle, from whence they were to proceed to London. I was astonished to see the agitation with which for so short a time he took leave of Horatia; for Willoughby's manners were in general calm and rational, equally free from extravagant demonstrations of feeling on the one hand or forbidding coldness on the other. A few words which dropped from him just before he left us, roused some suspicion in my mind, for till then I had been wholly unable to guess at the cause of my daughter's dejection; "Oh, my Horatia," he said, "why will you not confide in me! Do you think Eustace's own happiness is so dear to him, as that of the friend and sister of his heart?"

"To this affectionate, this impressive appeal, she was wholly silent. Oh

whither was flown that ingenuous candor, which used to accompany her every word and action? Ah why had artifice and disguise so warped a heart, naturally open and sincere! I now anxiously sought to discover the cause of Horatia's altered manners, and my suspicions soon fell on the young man I have already mentioned. Rouzed to excessive indignation at the idea, I acknowledge, that with violence and severity I by turns threatened and questioned the terrified Horatia. I could not bear to suppose that Eustace was to be forsaken, that I was to be defied, for one so lately a stranger. I will not, I cannot dwell on this part of my story! Obstinate in error, Horatia fell at my feet! At length she acknowledged her passion for······her new lover! He also assailed me with entreaties! I drove him from my presence with sharp reproaches! I forbade either him or the officious Emily ever to come within my doors again!——At the

end of two months Horatia escaped from the confinement to which I had condemned her till Eustace should return!

"What, if it were a solitary one! What, if in rage, in just rage, I sometimes reproached her for her inconstancy and deceit! What if I swore to see her marriage with Eustace completed the very day of his return! What if I mocked her tears, and spurned her supplications!............... But, whither am I running?—Strange! That years should have elapsed, and still, this subject frenzy me?—She eloped!—She fled with the man she preferred to Eustace, to her father! A man whom six months before she had never seen!——I followed!—I discovered them; but not till several days had passed. I found them inhabiting a wretched cottage-room, in an obscure village. My daughter, my heiress, engaged in the base occupations of a domestic; assisting an untaught rustic

girl to prepare a mean dinner for herself and—her villainous seducer!—Rage, madness seized me!—I tore them asunder; I forced her away with me; I left him to endure the despair, he intended to have been my lot." Lord Ennersdale paused a moment, then with greater calmness proceeded as follows.

CHAP. II.

"TO Ross-glen I carried my daughter; there again in solitude, I bade her think upon my wrongs, upon the wrongs of Eustace Willoughby! To him I wrote; I told him Horatia was no longer worthy of him, that he should never see her more. He left all, he flew to plead for her; even Eustace pleaded in vain, and after many days of fruitless entreaty, he left me and buried himself at West-hay.

The seducer of Horatia, after some time, traced our steps; he followed us to Ross-glen, he entreated, he implored; every day brought me letters conjuring me to restore Horatia to him. Once I saw him; no matter what were my proposals to him, what were his requests to me, on both sides they were rejected with indignation which grew at length to fury! I ordered my servants to turn him from my door; I vowed never again to endure him in my presence, never to suffer his name to be pronounced before me! I have kept my word.

"I knew that still lurking near us, he contrived to write more than once to Horatia; I knew what were his pretensions and his schemes. Those letters, and every other document respecting him are in this cabinet; no eye, since those of Horatia were closed in death, has ever seen them, save mine alone! None ever shall see them till"——He pressed his hand upon the cabinet

which stood before him, and his features, which during the latter part of his narrative had been alternately distorted with fury, or impressed by remorse, now assumed a new character: a degree of frenzy mingled with that triumphant smile which strangely contrasted the revengeful turn of his eyes, the deep contraction of his brow.

His whole countenance was so terrific that Magdalena shuddered, buried her face in her hands and uttered a stifled groan. The sound seemed in some measure to recall him to himself, and with somewhat more composure he thus proceeded in his extraordinary history.

"Thus passed three or four weeks, at the expiration of which, this hated being ceased to persecute me. His attempts to see Horatia, which till then had been in various ways continual, suddenly ceased. *He disappeared.* From that hour to this he has never been heard of."

An exclamation of surprize not unmixed with horror burst from the shrinking Magdalena; calmly, nay even with some contempt, Lord Ennersdale surveyed her, and continued.

"I know this disappearance caused various rumours; I know that suspicions were entertained..........But to all that I am indifferent. No doubt the villain, finding it vain to hope for my consent to their union, and knowing that even if he could have again carried her off, they must have starved together, forsook her, and sought some other means to acquire that wealth he could not obtain with Horatia. Whatever was his end he doubtless never will be heard of more.

"We removed to this castle. Here you were born. Ask me no particulars! I will not detail them! Rumour asserted that Horatia Delamere was a mother and not a wife. I neither confirmed nor contradicted it; I was callous to all! No one here knew so

much as the name of the wretch who had seduced her, no one but Eustace, and in his presence I had vowed never to hear it mentioned; he did not offend me.

"Horatia was ill, was dying! She saw no one but me and old Agnes; at length, oh dreadful hour! oh insupportable remembrance! she called me to her bed-side, and while Agnes supported her faded form, she drew back the curtain of a little cradle that stood near her. My eye fell upon an infant! The child of my daughter! A child without a NAME! Without a FATHER! On my knees I would have imprecated curses on his head, perhaps have included YOU within the imprecation!

"But Horatia,—angel still, though fallen, turned upon me those dying eyes, that pale, pale countenance, which, oh God! which are ever before me, and so ardently supplicated, so earnestly

entreated, that I consented to bear you in my sight, and not to curse you!

"She is yours, my father!" said my departing angel; "she is *yours only*; guard her for my sake! Keep her ignorant, if possible, of that fatal passion which has undone me; let her never know the baneful indulgence which left me without power to controul my wishes! If she should live, ah hapless, helpless babe! tell her who was her mother; tell her to be warned by my sad fate: Tell her to be *obedient* and to *be happy!* She died, she was buried! Some day I will shew you her tomb!"

Alas! thought Magdalena, who with tears and sighs which almost burst her swelling heart had heard this sad description of her mother's death, "alas! I have already seen it! And at what a moment, just heaven!"

"For some months after her death" continued Lord Ennersdale "I know not what past; my rage, my grief were

too powerful for my reason; my brain became disordered, all was a blank, or varied only by frightful images of despair and desolation!

"On my recovery, at least what seemed such, for I have never been wholly what I was before, I found my kind, my affectionate Eustace, guarding, nursing and comforting me; I found for ever on his knees and in his arms a smiling infant on which he doated; for a time my erring imagination led me to suppose it his child, and Horatia's; ah soon, too soon, I was undeceived. He had named the infant Horatia, after her mother, and added Magdalena Melrose, which was the maiden designation of his own, to whom in infancy my daughter had been tenderly attached: by mutual, though tacit consent we dropped the name of Horatia, which awakened in us both insupportable recollections, and called her always Magdalena. As I gazed on him, on this unfortunate child, strange ideas

crowded on my brain; I mentally vowed to educate this infant for him; and should she prove fair and virtuous, worthy, in short, to be his wife, she should become such, or I would for ever renounce her. Only on that condition I resolved ever to clear her mother's fame, ever to bear her father's name within my hearing, and then *once only*,—when on the eve before their marriage it would become necessary to announce it, to prove her legitimacy and to acknowledge her as my heiress."

Magdalena groaned! This dreadful explanation of all which in her life had appeared mysterious, seemed to freeze up the vital principle. What! doomed in helpless infancy, by the fantasy of a brain but just recovering from a madness, to a fate so strange, yet apparently so irrevocable! And could it be that Eustace, the generous Eustace, had accepted the unnatural sacrifice? Oh no! Impossible! To that faint hope

she clung, and it seemed to rescue her from the instant annihilation of her faculties.

"By degrees," proceeded Lord Ennersdale "I unfolded this idea to Willoughby; at first he gently smiled, yet soothingly yielded to a fancy which seemed to calm me; but as the first few years of your life stole on, as your person gradually disclosed a likeness, we both saw with emotions nearly insupportable (yet mingled with another which often made me almost start afresh into insanity,) he sometimes allowed himself, to dwell with complacency on this distant hope, but wearied at length with the monotonous life we led, he determined to travel, and not to return till you were of an age to consent to my wishes, or to refuse them; for Eustace would not hear of my entering into any engagement in your name, or endure the idea of finally claiming you but with the concurrence of your own heart."

Magdalena involuntarily clasped her hands in grateful joy! Lord Ennersdale surveyed her with a calm and half contemptuous smile; and said "I understand that motion, Magdalena; but learn that my will is immutable; my determination fixed beyond the power of aught on earth to change it. The time now approaches for Sir Eustace's return; I hoped to have so secluded you, that no other being should even have seen you, except those who could not in any way interfere with my plans; for this reason I chose the plain simple Mrs. Dennis, as a woman easily swayed, and too timid to dispute my will, or inspire you with rebellious ideas: perhaps, she has not too well fulfilled her duty!" Magdalena was now eagerly interrupting him; she would have protested that Mrs. Dennis had strictly abided by his injunctions, but waving his hand, he added, "It matters not! All is the same to me, but I would if possible

have saved you from the chance of *wishing* to be disobedient. Accident has frustrated this part of my scheme; you have been seen; I have reason to suppose you know, with what effect; but learn, Magdalena, that however highly I may estimate Lord Montaubrey's qualities; however grateful I may be for the timely assistance he rendered me, his, you cannot, shall not be. I see by this agitation, by this trembling emotion, how far you have suffered your wishes to run! But I am not to be a second time defied! Your fate is in my hands!

"In a very short time Eustace Willoughby returns; prepare to receive him as your future husband. Dare not to breathe a hint that with reluctance you consent to be his wife! On these terms I will acknowledge you as my heiress; I will openly declare and prove the legality of your mother's marriage; I will remove the slur which yet attaches on her memory! Refuse me, and I cast

you off, I deny your legitimacy, I leave your mother's name a prey to slander. I care not! I am indifferent to all! Even to the honour of my house, in comparison with my resolution to make you the wife of Willoughby,—to ensure him from a second disappointment. From infancy he has loved you, and for years dwelt with delight on the hope of returning to claim you. The caprice of a girl shall not again destroy the peace of my noble, my excellent Eustace! He will press you to know, if your heart coincides with his wishes; dare not to let him guess, you do not prefer him to all mankind! Montaubrey's you shall never be! Think not, if you disobey me, I will leave you at liberty to tell your tale to him or any other. From that moment, confined in a remote castle I possess in the wildest part of Scotland, with two domestics, who only speak the language of the Highlands, you shall waste your future life! Eustace will ask, Where is

Magdalena? Magdalena, I will reply, was base, was wicked, was unworthy of you! Think of her no more!

"Montaubrey, perhaps will also say, *Where is Magdalena?* She is gone! I shall cry; vile rebellious, and unnatural, no matter whither! Her birth uncertain; her alliance dishonorable; she is no wife for you! Soon forgetting her, he will seek another on whom no dishonour attaches; in the circles of gaiety, in the abodes of splendor they will pass their happy hours, while Magdalena, in solitude, shall endure a long, lingering existence, uncheered by one soothing remembrance of the past, one smiling hope for the future! In the horrors of night, her mother's marble monument shall render up its dead! Her mothers's shade shall cry "Weak, cruel Magdalena, restore to me my fame! Restore the spotless honor of the lost Horatia!"

"Oh, my Lord!" exclaimed Magdalena, overpowered by these horrid

denunciations, to which the wildness of his countenance and gestures added new terrors, "Cease, cease for mercy's sake! I am, I will be yours! I will obey you! Yet, O, for now disguise is vain, and silence useless, how, how, can I obey? Not only my heart is Montaubrey's, but my promise; my most solemn promise, that no earthly power should compel me to be the wife of another!" "Heavens and earth," exclaimed the enraged Lord Ennersdale, "I *have* then been deceived! You have set my will at defiance, and entered into a connection with Montaubrey, unknown to me! It is not yet too late that I learn this; this promise still may, nay, must be broken. Rise, Magdalena, nor tears nor supplications shall move me! Did I not refuse those of Horatia? How then can you expect I should hear yours!

"The alternative is before you; you know its utmost limit; tell me at once

your determination, for this is the last moment I allow you for deliberation!"

Bowed to the earth in agony of spirit, Magdalena ceased to supplicate this inexorable man; she turned her thoughts to a support which never fails the "broken and contrite heart;" she prayed mentally for help, for firmness, for direction. Her fair forehead almost touching the floor on which she knelt, her hands clasped upon her bosom, her bright hair falling over that countenance so full of woe, presented a picture so touching, so imploring, as might have moved any heart but one which years of sullen and silent grief had steeled, and rendered desperate in resolution. "Rise, Magdalena," again said Lord Ennersdale, "though the promise of a child like you, made unknown to its guardian, has neither validity nor power, that no scruple may remain, take this pen, write to Montaubrey, demand back a promise he had no right to ask nor you to grant. The

punishment of your errors be on your own head! Turn back however while yet there is time, before destruction overwhelms you! Take the pen?" he repeated, in a voice of fury, seeing her hesitate, "Write to Montaubrey, in whatever terms you please, so they express the meaning I have dictated; if you disobey me, this hour, this very hour you leave this house never to enter it more! I will also leave it; I will bury myself in some solitude, where rumour can never reach me, and leave the malicious world to say, 'MAGDALENA WAS LIKE HER MOTHER, DISOBEDIENT! AND LIKE HER MOTHER'S, BE HER NAME DISHONOURED!'"

Stung to the heart, by the cruelty of this expression, Magdalena started up, she seized the pen, exclaiming "No! let me die ere the unnatural prediction be accomplished! If you, my lord, have lost all regard for the honour of your child, for your own honour, Mag-

dalena is not so hardened in cruelty as to assist in destroying it!"

Struck by the animation of her air, the just reproach her words conveyed, Lord Ennersdale trembled in his turn; but "*bending up each corporal agent to the horrible feat*," he put the pen into her trembling fingers. With difficulty she wrote—"Release me, Montaubrey, from my promise; I cannot be yours! I must be the wife of another! Ah, Montaubrey! the *magic spells* you warned me of have indeed ensnared me! All is over!

MAGDALENA."

Without asking any explanation of the words of this billet, Lord Ennersdale folded, and ordered the victim of his tyranny to direct it: she obeyed; and instantly Lord Ennersdale despatched it to Milbank Park. During the absence of the messenger Magdalena remained in a state almost amounting to stupor, from which she was

aroused by his return with the following billet.

"Too surely, too surely, Magdalena, I predicted our fate. I knew if once again within those detested walls you exposed yourself to the gloomy machinations of a man, at once inexorable and powerful, you could not resist his menaces and entreaties. Yet think not I will thus tamely yield you up, or submit to a mandate obtained perhaps by force; for can you so soon have chânged? so soon have faltered in that resolution you declared nothing should shake? Oh, what have been the arts which could so powerfully affect a mind like yours! I must see you; in or out of the presence of your cruel guardian I care not; but your own voice alone shall induce me to believe you really demand back the promise you so lately gave. Appoint a time, and I will once more enter the gates of Delamere Castle; if, as my heart forebodes, to take an eternal farewell of

Magdalena, never more will I approach its hateful doors.

MONTAUBREY."

This letter Lord Ennersdale inspected, and then sent it to Magdalena, who, confused and half dead, hardly recollected what had passed. A little more recovered, she shed over it a torrent of tears, which somewhat relieved her. She sent Agnes to know if she might attend Lord Ennersdale, and received an affirmative reply. Supporting herself on the arm of Mrs. Dennis, who wept and grieved to see the grief of Magdalena, she once more sought Lord Ennersdale in his study: he ordered Mrs. Dennis to leave them, with a look which seemed to reproach her, as being accessary to the mischief that had occurred: she understood his glance, and not daring to defend herself, gladly left the room. Magdalena held Montaubrey's letter in her hand, and without speaking pointed to it, as if request-

ing her grandfather's directions how to to act.

"Write a line," said Lord Ennersdale; "and if he will see you, let it be to-morrow, at twelve o'clock; but if you are not very steady, Magdalena, very determined in your purpose!"— She did not speak, but, snatching the pen, wrote as follows:

"How can I see you, Montaubrey! Magdalena, half dead, powerless almost to speak, is unequal to the task you would impose upon her. No! since all is over, let us meet no more! I must be the wife of Sir Eustace Willoughby. He doubtless deserves one more likely to make him happy than the miserable Magdalena; he knows not, he must not know, that my consent to this marriage is wrung from me by considerations which would equally lead me to devote myself to the most cruel death! Keep my secret, Montaubrey! Let no one know that my heart, my promise, were yours, other-

wise the sacrifice I make would avail me nothing, and all the horrors of my wayward fate will be equally accomplished! Give me back then a promise I must not keep, and farewell for ever! Farewell also, too dear, too kind Isabella! forget, both of you, if possible, the unfortunate

MAGDALENA."

Lord Ennersdale ran his eyes over this letter; he wished Magdalena to have written another more decisive; but, shaking her head, she faintly articulated, "I can write no other."

This letter was therefore despatched, with the following billet from Lord Ennersdale:—"If Lord Montaubrey insists on seeing the Ward of Lord Ennersdale, it must be in his presence, at twelve to-morrow: but Lord Ennersdale would represent to Lord Montaubrey, the unnecessary cruelty of exposing Magdalena to a conflict, which must at last terminate in their separation. Lord Ennersdale would also

ask by what authority Lord Montaubrey has interfered with the arrangements of his family; and whether he thinks himself excusable for having seduced a child from her duty?"

To Magdalena the following answer was returned; "I am resolved to see you. To-morrow at twelve expect me.

MONTAUBREY."

To Lord Ennersdale, under the same cover, and left unsealed, for Magdalena to read, he wrote more at large; he reproached him for the cruel obstinacy with which he persisted in his tyrannical purpose: he defended his having entered into engagements with Magdalena, on the ground of the forced and unnatural seclusion in which Lord Ennersdale had kept her; denying her the society suitable for her age, and fettering her noble mind in ignorance and terror. Much more he said, but his reasoning was as ineffectual as his pleading had been fruitless.

With terror, with anxiety inexpres-

sible, Magdalena looked forward to the interview of the next morning. Sometimes soothed with the idea of seeing Reginald again, she almost forgot the purpose of his coming; sometimes a faint hope rose in her heart, that their mutual anguish might at last move even the stern mind of Lord Ennersdale; but with stedfast resolution she determined to rescue her mother's name from obloquy, and with pious tenderness devote herself to clear away the stain which hung upon her honour. Sometimes lost in wonder she could not believe, that Lord Ennersdale would really, in the event of her disobedience, persist in destroying the reputation of his own daughter! But, ah! she recollected, that this resolution originated in a mind diseased and warped by insanity, and had ever since been dwelt upon, with a determination which proved the truth of what he had asserted, that he had never since been

what he was before! she trembled then, and saw no hope of his relenting.

In meditations like these she passed a sleepless night, and nothing but the resolution to know her fate could have given her strength to rise. Pale and bowed down with weakness, she hardly could find sufficient power to gain the library, which Lord Ennersdale had appointed for this important conference. She bent her head to him as she entered, and he returned the salute in silence; she sat down upon a sopha, and neither spoke.

A few minutes had thus past, when the striking of the castle clock made her tremble; and in five minutes a loud ring at the outer bell announced the arrival of Lord Montaubrey. Still an awful silence prevailed; neither Lord Ennersdale nor Magdalena spoke; she distinctly heard that his breathing grew short and quick, and the beating of her own heart sounded audibly in her ears.

"The Earl of Montaubrey!" said Joseph, throwing open the door, and immediately retiring. Montaubrey eagerly advanced; he slightly bowed to Lord Ennersdale, and then stepping quickly towards Magdalena, he seized her hand, and, almost breathless with agitation, exclaimed—"Must I relinquish this hand, Magdalena? Is your resolution fixed?"

She tried to draw it from him; she faintly pronounced—"*It is,*" but with a look of so much woe; a countenance of such despair, that for an instant his emotion overcame him; the bright colour, which animated his cheek when he entered the room, suddenly forsook it, he became as pale as Magdalena herself; and, grasping her hands still more vehemently, he fell on his knees, and buried his face in her robe.

"Spare, my Lord," said Lord Ennersdale, in a slow and solemn tone, "spare that unfortunate girl and yourself, a scene like this! She has pro-

nounced her determination, and it is a refinement on cruelty to persecute her farther."

"Is it for *you!*" exclaimed Montaubrey, starting on his feet, his eyes illumined, and his cheeks again crimsoned over, "Is it for YOU, Lord Ennersdale, to descant on cruelty and persecution! Look at this lovely victim of your tyranny! Look at that pale cheek, those eyes, whose beaming brightness is extinguished by your harshness! Have you no touch of pity, my Lord? Can you thus devote to misery a being whose angelic virtues demand every happiness at your hands? Can you make those very virtues the instruments of her undoing? Can you excite the filial piety of that pure heart, to induce it to yield its every hope?—What! force her to be the wife of a man she never saw! At least, at least, my Lord, be contented with denying her to be mine; and insist not on a sacrifice, which the very heathens, who

give their children to the gods of fire, would shrink from, with trembling and abhorrence. Her determination do you call it! Ah, my Lord, well do I know the arts by which it has been extorted from her! Look at her, see if those eyes, that form, express a *willing* concurrence with your commands!"

"Since you presume to talk of *arts*, my Lord," replied Lord Ennersdale, "how will you answer to me for those, by which you have led Magdalena from her duty, and surreptitiously obtained a knowledge of my most private concerns; for by such means only you can have obtained the information of which you seem to boast! In vain, however, is all this violence; for reproaches, for entreaty, I am prepared; so I trust is Magdalena: she knows the alternative I have offered to her; the choice remains in her own power."

"Oh exquisite cruelty!" exclaimed Montaubrey, passionately striking his

fore-head; "such is the alternative offered to the wretched criminal; merely a choice of deaths. Once more, my Lord, indifferent to your implications, I tell you that I know the horrid acts by which you have worked upon her tender mind; I know that she imagines her mother's fame depends upon your word! But turn to me, Magdalena," he added again, approaching her; "now, even here accept the proposal I before made to you; put yourself openly, and at once under my protection; I will instantly take you hence; I will place you with my mother. To-morrow shall see you my wife, then to the laws of my country I will appeal, and force this tyrant to obey them! It will be easy to establish your mother's marriage...."

"Am I to be thus braved in my own house!" cried Lord Ennersdale with tremendous rage. "My Lord, you will force me to forget the decorum your rank demands; address but one

word more of such a nature to my ward, and my servants shall drag you hence!" "Heavens!" exclaimed Montaubrey, "have lived to hear a threat so degrading! Take care, my Lord, how you sanction the first approach to such an insult! Neither your age, nor any other consideration could in such a case restrain me!"

The tone of menace which both had adopted, struck with new dread the unfortunate Magdalena! "Cease, oh, cease! for heaven's sake," she faintly cried, "this frightful contention! Add not to the horrors which surround me, any thing so dreadful as your angry looks denounce! Leave us, Montaubrey, I conjure you! Lord Ennersdale has claims upon my duty, has a right in me in which I dare not, must not dispute! We must part, Montaubrey, we must part, and *for ever!*" "No, Magdalena!" replied Montaubrey, "not if aught of generous or humane survive in the breast of Sir

Eustace Willoughby! Honoured, respected as he has always been, welcome as the news of his return is to all who formerly knew him, I cannot believe he will accept a sacrifice so horrible! To him I will appeal, to rescue you from this inexorable man, nay even from yourself!"

"Useless, my Lord, and worse than useless," said Lord Ennersdale "would be your appeal! The moment Sir Eustace learns, directly or indirectly, that Magdalena has dared even to wish to make another choice, that moment all the evils she dreads shall fall upon her. *She knows what they are, she shrinks from them with terror.* Render not therefore her resolutions vain and nugatory; I again repeat, yours she never shall be; and if not the wife of Sir Eustace Willoughby, she knows her inevitable destiny!"

"You see, Montaubrey, you see," said Magdalena "it is in vain to struggle or contend! Leave me then to

fulfil my miserable fate, to perform my hard duties! while you, Reginald! while you—" Her gushing tears and swelling sighs impeded her utterance for a moment, but struggling with her emotion, she added, in a calmer tone, "yes, let me endure all! Let me fully accomplish my destiny,—let my misery atone for the errors of ALL! Be you, Montaubrey, happy! Seek one whose youth, unblighted by misfortune, whose, name untainted by dishonor, may render her worthy to be your wife,—to be the sister of Isabella? Ah loved, ah lamented Isabella! may she, may you forget me, or only remember me as one who *was*, but *is*, no more!"

Lord Ennersdale now insisted upon putting an end to this scene; perhaps his own feelings did not escape a share of the torture he inflicted. He requested Montaubrey to leave them, he commanded Magdalena to retire to her chamber. Montaubrey, regardless of his anger, passionately clasped her

to his heart; again he sought to shake her resolution, again she solemnly asserted her determination! At length, with tears, with agony, they parted, and the door which closed after him seemed to shut out from Magdalena every ray of happiness or hope. She listened till she heard the last of his receding steps, and then the necessity for exertion, over exhausted by the dreadful conflict, she fell at the feet of Lord Ennersdale, into a death like swoon. She was carried to her bed, and recovered from her fainting but to endure all the honors of delirium. A violent fever threatened her life, and several days elapsed ere the strength of her constitution, aided by Doctor Parry's skill, triumphed over the disease, and surmounted the immediate danger.

CHAP. III.

AT the expiration of ten days, Magdalena was sufficiently recovered to leave her apartment; Lord Ennersdale, by the permission of Doctor Parry, requested her to join him in a part of the castle he had never till then, within her memory, inhabited. With some attention to her feelings, he left the apartments they used to occupy, those where she had seen Montaubrey, and established himself in a suite of rooms the lightest and most elegant in the castle; the furniture, though not new, having been selected by Horatia a year or two before her death, was more modern than that of the rest of the house, and the whole appearance of the apartments less gloomy. The windows commanded a fine view of the valley, and the beau-

tiful river, which here assumed an animated character, falling in two or three natural cascades of great beauty. It was now the second week in July, the weather bright and clear, and all the gorgeous charms of Summer, glowing flowers, rich fruits and ripening harvest, spread around her; but, alas! all these external circumstances failed to enliven the wretched Magdalena.

"Yet not the lay of birds, nor the sweet smell
"Of different flowers, in odour, or in hue,
"Could make her any summer story tell,
"Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew:
"Nor did she wonder at the lily's white,
"Nor praise the deep vermillion of the rose!"*

All to her, in the present, was insipid, the past inspired only painful recollections, from the future she shrunk with dismay. Fortunately the arrival of Sir Eustace Willoughby was delayed for another week, and Magdalena had time a little to regain her strength before his return. Lord Ennersdale,

* Shakespear's Poems.

never by word or look reverted to the past; any one would have thought he actually had forgotten it; he shewed extraordinary kindness to Magdalena, was chearful and good humoured with Mrs. Dennis, and affected to fancy that Magdalena, like himself, had drank of the waters of oblivion! Oh, could he have looked into her heart, could he have viewed the crowd of painful recollections that in the dead hour of night thronged about her!

"When midnight o'er the moonless skies
Her shades of mimic death has spread;
When mortals sleep, when spectres rise,
And nought is wakeful but the dead;
No bloodless shape her way pursues,
No shivering ghost her couch annoys;
Visions more sad, her fancy views,
Visions of dear departed joys!
The shade of youthful hope is there"*

—But could he have seen all this, it would have availed her nothing; still would he have persisted in his determination, though certain that her death

* Ghost Seer by Spencer.

would be the consequence. His powerful and energetic mind once warped by madness, had never entirely recovered its tone, and had ever since cherished, with all the pertinacity which belongs to insanity, one settled and favorite idea; that idea was the marriage of Eustace and Magdalena; and me have already seen how vain were the efforts of reason and compassion to induce him to relinquish it.

At early morning, or when the setting sun illumined the windows of the apartment where Magdalena reclined on her sopha, in pensive abstraction, her thoughts flew to the alcove, to the happy hours she had passed there with Reginald and Isabella; she felt all the painful contrast of the present hour; yet youth triumphed over the remains of disease, and the rose began "*to blush and beautify her cheek again.*"

One evening as she sat listless and unoccupied, Lord Ennersdale entered, and sat down by her. After some un-

usually kind enquires after her health, he said, "To-morrow, Magdalena, I am to have a large dinner party; it was to have taken place last week, but your illness prevented it. Do you now feel well enough, and inclined to join it?" "I, my Lord!" exclaimed the surprised Magdalena; "I join a dinner party!"

"Certainly!—Why not?—It will not be long before you will be called upon to sit at the head of *your own table*. In the mean time, had you not better be gradually introduced to the neighbouring families, and do the honors of mine?"——This unequivocal allusion to her future fate, the first he had ever made, shot like a bolt of ice to her heart; she gasped for breath and averted her head.

"Since these things must be," he went on "it will be well to meet them with calmness, to endure them with fortitude. If you wish the introduction delayed, be it so, but if I might

advise, you would now get over the unpleasantness which must at any time attend your entré into the world, now, before any person particularly interesting is of the party: for Sir Eustace Willoughby will not arrive till the beginning of the next week."

Somewhat relieved by this intelligence Magdalena, drew her breath more freely.

"And as what, my Lord, am I to appear?" she asked, a little indignation giving her courage; "and under what name? For your visitors, strangers, will scarcely call me only Magdalena!"—She sighed, remembering how, in the commencement of her intercourse with Montaubrey, he had been embarrassed for a name to call her by, thinking the simple term of Magdalena too familiar for him, though not for Isabella.

"For that, I have provided," said Lord Ennersdale; "you know there is a name I never will suffer you to assume

but once!—By *that name* you shall sign the settlements Sir Eustace Willoughby will make upon you, and the register of your marriage, but till then you shall not know it: in the mean time, you shall be called Melrose; you have a just claim to that desiguation; I will introduce you as my ward, and near relation, the orphan daughter of dear friends. These explanations will satisfy curiosity and stifle conjecture, and when I shall chuse to explain your real claims upon me, will be in no wise inconsistent with them." "As you please, my Lord," replied Magdalena; "I am the creature of your will!" "If you think," said Lord Ennersdale, somewhat pained by her manner "that the dinner party will be too much for you, you can receive the company before dinner, and remain alone till the ladies return to tea." "Whatever your Lordship pleases," Magdalena with cold indifference replied, for now her fate was fixed, and she knew the extent

of her misfortunes, of his tyranny, she had lost all the dread she used to feel of offending him in trifles, and was insensible to those indications of displeasure, which used to freeze up her blood with terror: absorbed in one great, one overwhelming misery, all subordinate causes of distress seemed to her as nothing, and she was prepared in trifles to be wholly guided by him who in the most important concerns of life had refused her a voice.

Thrown out of his play by the coldness, yet gentleness of her manner, Lord Ennersdale hardly knew in what words next to address her. After a moment's silence, he said "Anticipating the necessity of your appearing in company, Magdalena, I have requested Mrs. Parry (who with the Doctor and their daughter will be here to-morrow) to send you such dresses as she thinks proper for your age; a trunk is consequently arrived, and I have ordered it to your apartment; you will select what

you think proper for to-morrow's wear; young ladies *at home*, I observe, are always plainly drest." "Very well, my Lord, I shall obey you." "But, Magdalena," said Lord Ennersdale, with some emotion, "do you mean to retain this sort of cold, (and perhaps I ought to say) sullen behaviour? Remember, I do not only expect you to *obey*, but not to *shew* that you obey with reluctance!" Magdalena sighed, a brighter flush tinged her cheek, and she said, "Surely, my Lord, you expect more than humanity can hope to attain!" "No, Magdalena," he replied, "I do not; I only expect that you will exert the energies with which nature has endowed you, and what you are obliged to do, perform with fortitude and consistency. Remember too, half the troubles you lament are of your own seeking; had you from the first implicitly obeyed, the fate you now so dread, would have been without terrors, nay even would have promised you the

greatest felicity; but you thought proper to judge for himself, to encourage advances you must have seen I wished to repell; to form connections——"

"It is enough, my Lord," replied Magdalena, waving her hand with the action of despair; "bitterly do I expiate my errors!—yet oh, permit me to say, had you earlier confided in me,—had you opened my heart by affection, instead of closing it by severity, you might have led me any whither; you might have impressed my ductile mind, like wax, with any figures you pleased! But why, oh why, these recriminations! let me atone for the errors of all!"

No longer sensible of the little sexual vanity, which a few weeks before had impelled Magdalena to alter her dresses, and improve her bonnet, she suffered Mrs. Dennis, (who for her part was even childishly delighted with the change) to attire her as she pleased in the new clothes, which Mrs. Parry had selected with great taste and propriety,

only taking care her governess did not load her at once, with every little ornament the trunk contained. Mrs. Parry had sent every article of apparel well made and fashionable, and Magdalena's light and elegant figure, was shewn to great advantage in a fine muslin robe; a single row of small pearls encircled her fair throat, which now for the first time was a little exposed to view: her finely turned arms were ornamented with bracelets of the same; and her hair, in its native ringlets, was only confined from falling too wildly, by a comb of the same materials.

"Her auburn locks, with wayward will,
Stray from the golden bodkin still;
Luxuriant, glossy, unconfined,
The silken ringlets freely wind;
Now on her snowy forehead wave:—
Sometimes they shade those lovely eyes,
Whose rays, thro' the dark lashes beaming,
In their own liquid diamonds gleaming,
Like summer meteors rise."*

Unconscious of her beauty, she permitted Mrs. Dennis to dress her, as

* Miss Mitford's poem of Blanche.

an infant dresses its doll, and scarcely bestowed a glance upon her new attire, which a few weeks before she would have worn with delight.

"Well now," said Mrs. Dennis, "at last I do see you dressed as you ought to be, though not as you would have been in my younger days. I suppose these thin muslins and short sleeves are the fashion. I remember the first time I went to a ball, how proud I was of my high heeled shoes, handsome silk gown, and pretty gauze cap, trimmed with artificial flowers; my gown was beautiful rich orange colored silk, my shoes were brocaded with silver; then my sleeves came down quite over my elbows, and I had fine lace."—She went on with a description of her first ball dress, to the great amusement of Judith, who assisted at Magdalena's toilet; for now Lord Ennersdale had had taken off the interdict, which prevented the servants from entering her apartments, and announced to Mrs.

Dennis and to them, that henceforth she was to be called Miss Melrose. Judith next proceeded to detail to Mrs. Dennis the wonders of a crimson damask saque and petticoat, which had descended from her mother to herself. "Not a thread the worse for wear, and as fresh as when it came out of the loom, together with a splendid lace head and ruffles, which had been the dowager Lady Haverford's, with whom her mother had lived *own woman;* aye, those were the days, Mrs. Dennis," she said, "when a lady was drest like a lady, and her clothes were worth her waiting maid's acceptance; I do believe one of the sleeves of my crimson damask has almost as much in it as Miss—as Miss Melrose has in the skirt of her gown!"

Agnes now shewed herself at the room door, and said Lord Ennersdale enquired for her *young lady;* for Magdalena observed, that Agnes had never called her Miss Melrose, but always

my young Lady, or Madam. The faithful old servant fixed her eyes on Magdalena's lovely, but melancholy countenance till the tears streamed down her cheeks, murmuring to herself, "Sweet creature! charming young lady! Oh, what a likeness!" Magdalena raised her eyes, and with a mournful, but affectionate smile, held out her hand to Agnes, and said, "My good Agnes, I am not now forbidden to say how much I prize and regard you!" "Oh, my dear young lady," answered Agnes, wiping her eyes "and now at last, I may ease my heart by telling you, how much I loved you, when you were a dear little infant, and your poor mamma put you into my arms, and said,—"—"Lord bless me, Agnes," said Mrs. Dennis, "Miss Melrose is low spirited enough, and you will make her worse with your old stories, and she will go down stairs with her eyes red, and spoil her looks entirely!" "Lack-a-daisey!" said Judith, "I thought for

my share, Miss would be as merry as a bird, and laugh and sing all day long, when my Lord brought her into company, after being shut up so long; and instead of that, she is more melancholy than when she used to spend all the day with Mrs. Dennis, or even with my Lord himself, or at best have only her little walk in the evening, to amuse her!" "Alas?" thought Magdalena, "those evening walks!"

Agnes now reminded her, that it was time to attend his Lordship, and the conference to which she had been almost wholly inattentive broke up, each female going her own way, and declaring so sweet a young lady never was seen: "Except once," added Agnes, again in a low voice. "No, nor yet once," answered Judith, speaking after her, "for Miss Melrose is far more beautiful than ever Miss Delamere was!" "*Miss Melrose! Miss Delamere!*" repeated Agnes with displeasure in her countenance.

Meanwhile Magdalena, whom these speeches but indistinctly reached, proceeded to the great drawing-room, an apartment never used but on state occasions, and where she had never spent half an hour in her life. Here Lord Ennersdale was ready to receive his visitors. On seeing Magdalena enter, he started, and the colour totally forsook his cheeks and lips; he suddenly looked as if he were dying; Magdalena, surprized and alarmed, stepped hastily forward exclaiming, "Are you ill, my Lord!"

"It is nothing," he replied, the blood rushing again to his face; "it was only a mementary sensation!" He gazed on her, however with a deep sigh, and she comprehended that her new stile of dress, combining with the paleness and pensiveness of her countenance, had rendered her likeness to the ill-fated Horatia more striking and remarkable.

The room in which they now were was hung with pale blue silk, orna-

mented with richly gilt cornices, and mouldings in pannels, (the chairs and of the same ;) between the pannels fine pictures were placed, chiefly portraits of the Delamere family, by the first masters, none which was not remarkable for good execution being admitted. Opposite the door hung two half lengths, one evidently that of Lord Ennersdale in middle life, the other a Lady about the same age, a fine handsome figure, with a commanding and expressive countenance; on the side pannel, next the Earl's, was the portrait of a gentleman, apparently not more than twenty, remarkable for its soft and amiable expression, animated however by eyes full of intelligence: the side pannel next the lady's was entirely unoccupied, though the silk hanging, a little faded, declared that a picture the size of the young man's had once filled it. Magdalena stood a minute gazing earnestly on these portraits; Lord Ennersdale joined her and

said, "That, Magdalena, is my picture." "It is still very like you, my Lord," she replied. "No, no" he answered; "much has passed since that was taken, to alter me!—That was done for my late wife, Mrs. Delamere, for she never was Lady Ennersdale. That, look at it well, Magdalena; mark the sweet and sensible expression of that fine continuance; see that benevolent smile, that look of good will to all, so perfectly expressive of the heart from which it sprung! that was the picture of Sir Eustace Willoughby!" Magdalena sighed and started at the sound. "And here, Magdalena, here," said Lord Ennersdale, turning with an emphatic look and action to the empty pannel, "here—once hung a portrait—which shall be replaced, when you are LADY WILLOUGHBY."——Magdalena's swelling heart responded that to obtain such an object would almost repay her for all she must sacrifice by assuming that name, but her lips were silent.

She stood before the vacant pannel, her eyes raised, and her imagination filling up its boundary with that lovely portrait she had once seen, and which Agnes had pathetically described as "*disgraced from its station.*"

"Oh, my mother!" she mentally exclaimed, "let me once see it placed here, acknowledged as the portrait of Lord Ennersdale's daughter, the wife of my unfortunate father, and I care not what afterwards becomes of your Magdalena!"

The stopping of carriages at the great door, which the windows of this room over-looked, announced the arrival of company. A slight flush spread itself over the fair cheek of Magdalena; her eyes, timid and full of intelligent modesty, hardly dared to observe who entered the room. "Ah," thought she, "no one I know! No one who cares for me! No Reginald! No Isabella!"

Sir Jerome and Lady Macartney were first announced. He was a man of

about fifty, gentle and sensible in his manners. Lady Macartney, some years younger than himself, was remarkable for an immoderate love of talking; a tolerably good memory had enabled her to retain a few imposing phrases, either sanctioned by fashion, or used by persons of extensive information; but, from a want of real knowledge, she frequently misapplied or grossly mistook the words she had taken such pains to learn, and fancied made her appear so clever. She had not been married more than a twelvemonth, and this was the first summer she had passed at Hurstham, the name of Sir Jerome's seat, so that she had never before been at Delamere Castle.

Lord Ennersdale introduced Magdalena to both, as Miss Melrose, his ward and relation, the orphan daughter of a dear friend. Sir Jerome's politeness subdued the look of curiosity and interest which his countenance involun-

tarily expressed: he bowed to her with a degree of kindness; and Lady Macartney seated herself on a sopha next Magdalena, and began a sort of voluble conversation, if conversation that could be called which consisted of "*generous questions which no answer wait.*"

"So, my dear, you are just liberated from the nursery! Just come out, as we say in London! Well, a'n't you vastly glad? Weren't you vastly tired of nurses, and masters, and governesses, and all that sort of thing? Yes, I thought so!" (Magdalena had not spoken or even looked an answer.) "Poor child! They are shocking torments indeed! I know I was glad enough *four or five years* ago to get rid of them altogether! And after all, what use are they of, unless a young lady means to set up for a blue stocking, or amateur, or something of that sort?" How Magdalena wondered at terms of which she could not even guess the meaning! Her ladyship pro-

ceeded—"And that is quite out now, I assure you; Mrs. Wolstoncroft's fashion is totally exploded. Not but what *accomplishments*—you take me, my dear? —*accomplishments* tell very well; but there's no need of poetry, and history, and all those things. To be sure, young ladies are thought the better of for a little smattering of chemistry, and *mnumonics*, and *mine-ology*; at least, it's the fashion to hear lectures about them: some do go so far as anatomy; but for my part I do not think it quite decent, and proper, and so forth! Well, my dear, I am quite glad you are of my opinion. I dare sày you are a very clever nice girl; and I have heard you play very well on the harp; pray is it true? You learnt, I think, of Maxwell; but I suppose Lord Ennersdale will give you a finishing in London. I shall go in the spring; and I assure you, Miss Melrose, I shall be very happy to patronize and introduce such a modest, sensible young lady as I see you are!"

Magdalena bowed her thanks for the voluble lady's good opinion, who next attacked Lord Enpersdale.

"Well, my lord, I have been talking to your fair ward, and I assure you I am quite pleased with her agreeable conversation; we think very much alike, and I am sure should agree extremely well; pray bring her to Hurstham. By the bye, I hope your lordship will never meet with such another accident as you did last time you honoured us! Bless me, was not it vastly distressing? What a mercy Lord Montaubrey happened to be so near! Dear, what a fine young man that is! Out and out the finest I have seen for some years. But don't you think it is odd enough he should have flown off, as one may say, from Milbank, a fortnight ago, without waiting to finish the deeds and accounts, and all those things he came on purpose to complete? I assure you Lady Milbank says, he is odd, very odd; but

then all those geniuses are so, all eccentric; and I am told he is quite a genius, and writes delightful poety: pray did he ever show any of it to your lordship?"

"No, indeed, madam," replied Lord Ennersdale, looking excessively vexed; "I was not on terms sufficiently intimate with his lordship to expect such a confidence."

"Dear me, well, I thought he had been quite one of your *exclusives*, and indeed I wonder he was not; for even in London I am told the dowager countess is considered *very good fashion*, and the young earl has talents which will make him quite *recherche*, quite a second Lord *****; he is expected to make a great figure in the house." And her ladyship having thus dragged into use every fashionable word she could recollect, looked round in triumph to observe the effect of her harangue. The subject of her *bavardage* had so completely confused and

occupied Magdalena, that she paid no attention to the jargon of which it was composed; indeed, had it struck her as singular, she would modestly have supposed that her own ignorance of the world alone made it appear so.. Lord Ennersdale, provoked at the subject her ladyship had selected, now gladly rose to receive Dr., Mrs., and Miss Parry, who were next announced; and to whom he also introduced Magdalena. Mrs. and Miss Parry were sensible and well bred, without any particular pretensions, either personal or mental. The doctor, completely the gentleman, a man of singular literary attainments, and possessed of a most kind and benevolent disposition; he was a universal favourite, and no party was thought complete without Dr. Parry, though his very extensive practice often obliged him to decline invitations; and it was considered quite a treat, if he dined or spent the evening free from interruption with any one.

His chief relaxation was a rubber of whist, which he played remarkably well, and with as much good humour as skill. He now approached Magdalena, who, glad to see him, made room on the sopha, and greeted him with a gentle smile. "Well, my fair patient," he said, "quite recovered? You begin to look as I would have you, though I still see a little too much flutter and hurry of spirits in your eyes. It is quite out of rule to speak professionally in a mixed company; nevertheless, as I have not seen you for two or three days, I know my good Lady Macartney will forgive me if I feel your pulse." He gently took her hand, and again repeated, "Too much hurry; not quite steady: I hope you are not going to dine with us?" "Oh, doctor, how ungallant," said Lady Macartney; "I did not expect such a speech from you!" "I am speaking as a physician now," he replied, with a good-humoured smile; "and I must tell Miss Melrose,

that the heat of a dining room this warm day is not fit for her;—better have a plate sent to you—" "I had no intention, sir, of dining at table to-day," answered Magdalena; "Lord Ennersdale said I might be excused." "Certainly, certainly," said Lady Macartney; "what, you have been an invalid lately? Well, I thought you looked a little pale; but you must make haste and get well now, my dear: for I hear, doctor, we are to be very gay this autumn; Sir Eustace Willoughby, they say, is coming immediately to West-hay, with the dowager Lady Piercefield, and her two daughters, the Hon. Miss Arlingtons, and a world of company beside. West-hay has, I know, been put into complete repair; several of the rooms are new furnishing, one entire suite a l'Egyptienne; the fine gardens and hot-houses are putting in order: nay, some say, Sir Eustace is going to be married. Lord, he can't be very young, I think; and having

been about so in foreign countries never makes a man look younger. By the bye, (lowering her voice) have I not heard that he is a great friend of Lord Ennersdale? And was there not something once about his being to be married to a Miss Delamere, a daughter of his lordship's, I believe? Sure I have heard Sir Jerome say something about it, but I am so forgetful!"

"We will discuss this subject some other time," answered Dr. Parry; who, still holding Magdalena's wrist, felt her pulse fluttering with excessive agitation; and, casting his eyes on her face, he easily read, that the topic of Lady Macartney's discourse was sufficiently interesting to her to account for its alteration: indeed, having lived some years in the neighbourhood, the reports concerning Magdalena had reached him, and he had reason to conjecture, that Lady Macartney, in speaking of Miss Delamere, had touched a string too tender. In truth, Magdalena began to think her

ladyship was trying how she could most severely torture her feelings. Some more company now arrived; Sir William, Lady, and Miss Selwyn; General Newport and family; and one or two others; and shortly after dinner was announced. "Well, my dear Miss Melrose," said Lady Macartney, "I am really sorry we must leave you behind:—Do you know, my lord, that Dr. Parry thinks it not proper for Miss Melrose to dine with us?—We will come to you after dinner, my dear; you will be here, I suppose?"

"Shall Margaret stay with you, Miss Melrose," said Mrs. Parry; "she will be happy to partake your dinner?" "By no means," said Lord Ennersdale; "we must not lose Miss Parry. Magdalena shall have a chicken, either here or in her own apartment: indeed, my dear, you look weary, you had better keep quiet." "I should recommend a lounge on the sopha," said Dr. Parry, "rather than a tete-a-tete; so come,

Margaret, and leave Miss Melrose to herself."

The whole party now removed to the saloon, where they were to dine; and Magdalena gladly obeyed her kind physician's directions. A chicken and some other light viands were brought to her, of which having slightly partaken, she rested on a sopha: her eyes fixed on the portrait of Sir Eustace Willoughby, or wandering to the vacant pannel, where her mother's ought to have been placed, she revolved all the circumstances of her painful situation; "And must I," she thought, "be for ever subject to such trials of my feelings as that talkative Lady Macartney has to-day inflicted! Must Montaubrey's name be perpetually repeated in my hearing, while, concealed in my heart, the remembrance of himself shall corrode the very springs of existence! Must thy name also, oh beloved and unfortunate mother!—that name so sacred to my feelings, be the sport of

every idle tongue! What a fate of complicated misery is mine!"

After dinner, when the ladies returned, some of them, having never seen the house, requested permission to look at the principal apartments. "I am afraid," said Magdalena, with a languid smile, "I should make but a bad Cicerone; for I have lived almost wholly in my own apartments, and in those which Lord Ennersdale usually occupies, and hardly know my way about some parts of the castle."

"Well, that is droll enough," said the tormenting Lady Macartney; "why I heard indeed that you were greatly confined, and that Lord Ennersdale never let you be seen. Dear, now I remember Lady Milbank told me, when they came to see the house, that your guardian sent you away directly; and while they were crossing the hall you fell amongst them, as if from the clouds, half down the great stair-case: nay, indeed, said Lady Milbank, I be-

lieve Montaubrey thought it actually was something more than a mere mortal; for he was quite smitten with the young lady, whose name Lord Ennersdale never told us, and Lady Isabella Aubrey has talked of nothing else ever since.—This she told me soon after it happened. Lord, my dear, did not you hurt yourself sadly, falling down those great marble stairs?"

But Magdalena could not answer; her pale cheeks, trembling lips, and closing eyes, alarmed them—"Bless me, my dear! sit down," said the officious Lady Macartney; "I declare, I believe you are going to faint away! Dear Miss Parry, have you any salts? Lord, what a plague it is, nobody ever has any thing now; I declare I wish pockets would come into fashion again, and then when people faint away, one might have some salts or hartshorn, or something or other to give them!—Thank ye, Mrs. Parry, there's a dear good soul! what a comfort you *old-*

fashioned ladies are! and more sensible than *us* I am sure to have pockets, and pincushions, and smelling bottles, and all those useful things!"

Mrs. Parry was but few years older than Lady Macartney; and, though rational, her dress was perfectly fashionable; she smiled, and, advancing towards Magdalena, said, "Lean on me, my dear Miss Melrose: pray, ladies, stand back, you keep off the air. Margaret, open the window."—Then waiting in silence the effect of her judicious cares, she had the pleasure of seeing Magdalena's colour return, and of saving her from fainting quite away.

"Pray, pardon me," said Magdalena, "my late illness has left me very weak."

"And one had need to be very strong," whispered Mrs. Parry, smiling, "to stand Lady Macartney's incessant prattle." Magdalena smiled also. "Lord, how pretty she is when she smiles!" said Lady Macartney; "I never saw

such a smile in my life! There's a dear Mrs. Parry, what did you say to her to make her smile? for she is very grave, I see. I talked to her for half an hour this morning, and she did not smile once! Well, my dear, but we need not trouble you. I suppose the housekeeper can shew us the castle?"

"Certainly," answered Magdalena; and ringing the bell, she requested that Agnes might attend to shew the ladies the house. Agnes instantly obeyed.

"Dear, what a quiz of a figure!" said Lady Macartney, tittering, to Miss Selwyn; "how I should like to know where she got that gown! I do believe it came out of the ark, or at least was worn at the siege of Troy. Pray, ma'am," turning to Agnes, and looking at her through her eye-glass, "is that your usual costume?" "Madam," answered the respectable old woman, "did your ladyship speak to me?" "Yes, we want to know, whether y-

always dress in that style?" "Yes, madam, I always wear the same sort of garb; my lord likes to see us as we used to be in the time of his lordship's mother; and indeed we are all *old*, and do not wish to make ourselves look *young*."

The supprest laugh which rose around, covinced Lady Macartney that this speech was applied to her, who, at forty, dressed and behaved like a girl of eighteen, and wished to have it understood, that she had not been released from the nursery more than five or six years: Agnes, however, whose old eyes could not distinguish what sort of person she was, meant nothing of the kind; but Lady Macartney, angry that her attempt at quizzing had recoiled upon herself, now with some haughtiness asked if they might see the house; and Agnes, with a respectful courtesy, led the way. "I have seen the house," said Mrs. Parry, "and will stay here till you return." Magdalena,

whose strength would not permit her to make the tour of the rooms, now sat down with Mrs. Parry, whose calm soft manners composed and soothed her. "Poor Lady Macartney," said Mrs. Parry, with a gentle smile; "what a pity it is she mistakes the matter so entirely; her efforts *pour faire l'agreéable*, and to pass for a *very* young woman, really make her very fatiguing; yet she has some good qualities, is an affectionate wife, an excellent mistress, and does a great deal of good amongst her poor neighbours at Hurstham."

"Sir Jerome seems a man of superior understanding, and very pleasing manners," said Magdalena; "I should not have thought Lady Macartney likely to be the woman of his choice." "Sir Jerome," answered Mrs. Parry, "met with a disappointment in his youth, and lived single till about a year and a half since; he is not rich, and Miss Evelyn's large fortune, joined to a person not un-

pleasing, and an evident inclination towards him, fixed his attention upon her: her father was a rich merchant, and gave her what is called a good education; that is, he raised a superstructure of the lighter accomplishments, but never looked at the foundation; her mind remained uncultivated, and she occasionally makes a gross blunder when meaning to appear particularly clever, at which Sir Jerome cannot keep from blushing." Magdalena, mild and gentle, forbore to mention those of the morning, though she felt a degree of confidence in Mrs. Parry, which, indeed, her extreme youth and natural openness of heart would equally have led her to repose in any one possessed of winning manners, who was kind to her. She had yet to learn the worldly lessons of reserve and suspicion, without a certain degree of which no one can live in society, without exposing themselves to endless mischiefs.

After a little more quiet conversation

with Mrs. Parry, Magdalena found her spirits quite revived, and able once more to encounter the perpetual sound of Lady Macartney's never-ceasing chat, of which it might well be said,

"Ye gods! 'tis like a rolling river,
Which murmuring flows, and flows for ever!"

And which they heard approaching, when the ladies returned to the drawing room, some time before they were visible. "This, ladies, is the last room in the suite," said Agnes, and with a respectful courtesy was retiring; but Lady Macartney, not yet tired of pictures, and anxious to show off her superior virtû to Mrs. Parry and Magdalena, who had not before witnessed it, now, with the air of a connoisseur, began to examine those which were suspended from the walls around her, and to apply to them all the terms of art, which she had treasured in her memory, to be produced on proper occasions. "And who is this?—and who

is this?" she repeated; Agnes acting as nomenclator to them all—

"This is General Delamere, who was in the battle of Blenheim; this is the Lady Anne Lovel, first wife of the late earl; this is Lady Catherine Stukely, his seond wife."......"And who is this?—Oh, I see plainly, this is the present earl—very like him still! A Reynolds I see!—very fine lights——great harmony—nothing to disturb it!——And this?"—

"That is my lady, my lord's late wife; she died before he came to the title."

"A fine woman! good drapery, the flesh good! rather too much like ivory.——And who is this, rather handsome, young man?"

"Sir Eustace Willoughby, madam."

"Sir Eustace Willoughby! Sir Eustace Willoughby!" repeated all the ladies. "Oh, do let us look at it! I wonder whether he is like it now. How

old was he when this was taken, Mrs. Agnes?"

"About twenty, my ladies."

"And did you know him?"

"Yes, madam."

"And is it like him? And how came it here? Dear, how odd! Well, I thought I had heard something about it!" said Lady Macartney. "And what used to hang *here*, Mrs. Agnes?" pointing to the vacant pannel.

"A picture, my lady—a portrait, that---that——an accident——a misfortune"——

"A picture," said Magdalena, recovering, by a strong effort of mind, power to speak, and determined to put an end to this tormenting conversation, "A picture, which the death of the original made too interesting to Lord Ennersdale's feelings to admit of its remaining *here*; he is now, in some measure, recovering the shock, and *the picture will probably soon be replaced.* In the mean time let me en-

treat that no word respecting it may reach his ears."

As she spoke an expression of animated dignity filled her countenance; her eyes were lighted up by the fervour of her mind; her finely-formed head, raised with native grace, presented a living picture, so enlivened, so interesting, as drew the attention of all from the inanimate figures around them.—Agnes gazed on her a moment, then with a deep sigh quitted the room.

"Upon my word, my dear Miss Melrose," said the indefatigable Lady Macartney, "I do think your life must have been tiresome beyond expression; these old domestics are really very fatiguing personages, for they look so cool and dignified, one's afraid of laughing at them, and I am sure the very sight of them gliding about is enough to wear out one's spirits; I cannot think how you got on at all amongst them!"

The gentlemen now returned to the

drawing room, the card tables were set, and Magdalena, for the first time in her life, saw the different parties sit down to their various amusements.

Miss Parry, Miss Selwyn, one of the Miss Newports, and her brother, a youth of sixteen, sat out and chatted with Magdalena till the party broke up, and all was once more quiet within the walls of Delamere.

"And these," thought Magdalena, "are the parties I used to wish so ardently to join! Good heavens, how fatiguing is that Lady Macartney! The rest are very well; but, oh! how much inferior the very best to Reginald and Isabella!"

CHAP. IV.

THE days now glided on unmarked by any particular occurrence, but not unobserved by Magdalena; she endea-

voured to strengthen her mind as much as possible, and to prepare herself to receive Sir Eustace without undue emotion. She strolled a little on the lawn occasionally with Mrs. Dennis; but the care of her aviary she had committed to the gardener, to avoid the sight of scenes so interesting, so full of painful memorials.—

> "Of joys departed, never to return,
> How painful the remembrance!"—

Lord Ennersdale offered several times to take her out in the carriage, to call with her at Hurstham, or the houses of those other ladies to whom she had been introduced, but she declined the proposal, and only wished she might have been permitted to remain undisturbed and unsought, for the rest of her life, in Delamere Castle. But this was not to be her fate, and Sir Eustace Willoughby's arrival at West-hay was announced to her by Lord Ennersdale with determined coolness: regardless of her trembling

frame and pallid cheeks, he said, "To-day, Magdalena, I shall visit my friend alone, but if I find Lady Piercefield and her daughters disposed to receive you, to-morrow I shall take you with me and present you to them." Magdalena raised her supplicating eyes to him; "Nay," said he, replying to the expressive look, "of what use is delay? The visit must be paid, and the sooner the better. Sir Eustace does not know that I have told you what my intentions are; he did not approve of the seclusion in which I have kept you, and generously wishes to gain your favour by his attentions, or to renounce your hand, if he cannot gain your heart: but you know, Magdalena, the terms of our convention." "I remember them, my Lord, but too well!" answered Magdalena. "Enough," said Lord Ennersdale; "I rely implicitly on your honour not to infringe them."—Magdalena replied, "My Lord, I will not deceive your expectation."

Lord Ennersdale then left her, and ordering his carriage, set out for Westhay. He returned to dinner in good spirits, delighted with the return of his friend, and to see him look so well.

"He is very little altered," he said, "and Lady Piercefield, is as agreeable as she was in her youth; Miss Arlington is handsome, and highly accomplished; Miss Henrietta has not so fine a person, but looks sensible and lively; they are quite delighted at the idea of seeing a great deal of you, Magdalena, though, let me warn you, that they have no idea you are to be Lady Willoughby. I shall take you to Westhay to-morrow." A deep sigh was Magdalena's only answer, of which Lord Ennersdale affected to take no notice.

Magdalena for the last three or four days had breakfasted, and spent two or three hours with Mrs. Dennis in her own apartments; she then joined Lord Ennersdale, who still inhabited his

newly chosen rooms, and remained with him till the evening; those hours after tea, which she used to devote to walking, he left her to fill up as she pleased; he spent them himself in his study, into which she had not the courage to enter, and he indulged her by returning to the small drawing-room, where they usually sat, instead of sending for her; indeed his whole manner towards her was greatly changed; and having, as it appeared, effected the purpose he designed his severity to answer, he now, in a great measure, threw it aside, and lived with her on terms of ease and equality which would have made her very happy, but for the thorn which rankled in her bosom and destroyed her peace.

After tea, in the evening of this day, Lord Ennersdale, asked Magdalena if she would not walk out, as the weather was beautiful, and the air, after a hot day, becoming delightfully cool and refreshing.

"You confine yourself too much, Magdalena," he said "you will never recover your strength and complexion, if you remain so entirely in the house. You used to love walking, and have been from infancy accustomed to take exercise."

"I do not love walking now," said Magdalena. Lord Ennersdale fixed on her a penetrating look: he shook his head, and said, "You are wrong, child, not to exert yourself; you will ruin your health. To-morrow, however, you will go to West-hay, and I hope after that you will every day be more inclined to be active and chearful."—He then left her, and feeling some inclination to take a turn on the lawn, she put on a veil which lay near her, but still undecided and hesitating she walked towards a window, and pensively gazed on the lovely landscape below. She saw the bright sun approaching to the west, and sighed as she recollected how often with impa-

tient eagerness she had watched its arrival in that part of the heavens, which marked the hour when Reginald and Isabella would be waiting for her at the alcove, and a torrent of tears streamed down her cheeks. She wiped them away, however, determined not to indulge in unavailing sorrow, and to endeavour to strengthen her mind to meet what was inevitable with composure. She had thus passed some minutes in reflection when the step of some one entering the room roused her attention; she stood in the deep recess of a window, and was not visible from the door; she heard a servant say, "My Lord is not here, Sir, be pleased to wait a moment and I will call him;" he then shut the door, inclosing the person he had thus introduced, and wholly unconscious that any other was there. Magdalena felt that her situation was aukward, and with the timidity natural to a girl so young and unused to society, she knew not whether to advance

or remain shaded by the projecting part of the recess. The gentleman now slowly moved forward, he sighed deeply, and murmured to himself some indistinct sentences. Every moment encreased Magdalena's embarrassment. As she stood the clear radiance of the setting sun threw a bright glow upon her lovely figure, and illuminated her finely turned head, throwing it forward in contrast with the deep shade in which part of the recess was involved. The veil she had thrown over her had fallen back, and waved with easy grace behind her, leaving her bright hair, fair forehead, and the soft yet dignified contour of her countenance shaded but not concealed. She stood still, and in an attitude of such unaffected grace as gave her the semblance of a beautiful statue.

The stranger now advancing, suddenly caught a view of her. Struck, astonished, overwhelmed, he first started back, then with a sudden motion,

and with eyes which seemed starting from their orbits, he fell at her feet, exclaiming, "Horatia!—Dearest Horatia!—"

It was Sir Eustace Willoughby; his imagination raised, and his heart softened by finding himself once more in Delamere Castle, had well prepared him for the sudden impression the sight of Magdalena, in such an attitude, and at such a moment, could not fail to produce: he was again the youthful, the tender Eustace, returning, after some short absence, to greet his beloved Horatia. Magdalena was that ever loved, ever lamented being! And of all the past he only remembered at this moment, the fond claims, the enchanting hopes she had once allowed him to cherish!—Instantly, however the sweet delusion past away; sober reason asserted her rights, memory, too faithful memory, recalled all the dreadful circumstances which had

passed since Horatia lived, and lived for him alone!—

Overwhelmed with anguish and confusion, Magdalena sunk on a chair; and Sir Eustace suddenly rising, exclaimed "Forgive me!—Pray forgive me!—My reason, though a temporary delusion, a sweet yet melancholy delusion seems to have impaired it, is yet in my possession.—I am not," he added with a pensive smile, "quite the madman you must have thought me!—Years indeed of hard endurance; of *sober real* grief, ought to have subdued this fever of the imagination—yet if you knew—if you could conjecture!"——He gazed on her intently, and added in a lower tone—"Good heavens!—How like, and how lovely!"—He paused and Magdalena, assuming a little courage, said in a low voice,—"I think—I believe—I see Sir Eustace Willoughby."——Again he started, and a universal tremor shook his frame; he turned away, and hiding his face in

his hands, burst into a flood of tender tears, exclaiming, in broken accents— "That face!—That voice!—It is, it must be herself, her very self!"

Magdalena, overcome, and affected beyond measure, wept also, and ere they could recover their composure Lord Ennersdale entered the room. Concerned, but not surprized at the sight of his friend's emotion, the Earl advanced towards them, and taking Sir Eustace's hand, said "My dear friend, compose yourself, I wish I could have prevented all this; I feared it would be thus! Magdalena, I thought you were gone to walk!"—Sir Eustace now hastily retreated to a window at the other end of the room; he hid his head on his arms, and the sobs with which he seemed to struggle, alone broke the awful silence which succeeded. Magdalena's tears fell fast, and Lord Ennersdale almost groaned with stifled emotion. At length, even down his cheek—tears—yes!—they

were TEARS, which Magdalena saw streaming from his eyes!—She hailed the welcome strangers which seemed to relieve him from an oppression almost insupportable! For the first time in her life she threw her arms about his neck, and they wept together * * * * * * At length rousing himself he said, "Think, Magdalena, what that grief must have been, which thus, at a period so distant, shakes two manly hearts almost to dissolution! I never thought to shed another tear—but the sufferings of that excellent—that injured——Magdalena!" he added in a low voice, "be it yours to console him!—"

Sir Eustace now again approached them, and taking Lord Ennersdale's hand, with an assumed composure, he said, "Can you pardon me all this?—And you!" he added, turning to Magdalena, "can you forgive me all the agitation my strange conduct has caused you.——What shall I call her,

Ennersdale?" said he, as leaning gently on the Earl's shoulder he wistfully gazed upon her.——"By what name do you distinguish her?"——"We still call her Magdalena," replied the Earl "and for the present—*Melrose*——I thought I had told you this in the morning."—"True; but my brain seems bewildered!—Why did you not tell me of this extraordinary, this irresistible resemblance?—Soon, I hope I shall learn to see her with less emotion. In the mean time, sweet Magdalena, can you pity and forgive me?"——"Ah Sir," answered Magdalena, "the cause of emotions so painful to yourself is, in my eyes, so sacred as to claim my tenderest sympathy!"——

"Astonishing!—The voice, the air! the very mode of expression, so like, so very like!—I must leave you!—I shall relapse again!—Farewell, Ennersdale—farewell; I hope a night of calm reflection will enable me to subdue these too painful agitations!—You will come to West-hay to-morrow:—And

you, will come also, fair Magdalena, or will you allow Lady Piercefield and my neices to wait on you here."—"She shall come with me," said Lord Ennersdale, "if, my dear Eustace, you will promise me to be more yourself."

"Oh, yes, certainly; I shall be quite calm to-morrow; and you will stay all day? You will let me see her one whole day?"

"Many, many whole days I hope!" replied Lord Ennersdale. Sir Eustace wrung his hand, caught and kissed that of Magdalena, and instantly left them.

The whole of this extraordinary scene had passed with the utmost rapidity; Magdalena was so confused, so overpowered by the emotions Sir Eustace had expressed and excited, that she scarcely had noticed his personal appearance. His voice, however full, touching and impressive, had appealed with irresistible energy to her affections. She felt that as a brother, as a friend,

as the tender mourner of her mother, she could love him: the affecting remembrance he still retained of the unfortunate Horatia proved how dear she had been to him, and called forth all the gratitude and sympathy of her daughter's heart. But to marry him!—To be his wife!—She shrunk with horror from the thought. It seemed almost like sacrilege to her imagination, to consider him who had so adored her mother, as the lover of herself!——Oh, had he been her father!—Had he in Horatia lamented a wife, as well as the mother of Magdalena, how she could have loved, how devoted herself to his consolation!—But now—impossible!—impossible!———She started as the piercing reflection struck upon her heart, that his wife, if he should wish it, she must be, and her sickening fancy recoiled from all that life so circumstanced could offer!—

Lord Ennersdale, whose long concentrated feelings had been so power-

fully excited, remained pensive and silent the rest of the evening; the supper was served and carried out untouched; neither disturbed the others ruminations, which on both sides seemed to engross them fully, and they parted scarcely having exchanged a syllable but the usual good-night. In the gallery Magdalena, for a wonder, met Agnes, who usually retired very early to repose. She stopped an instant with kind greetings, which since she had been permitted to speak to her, she never omitted. Agnes took her hand, and kissing it, said, "Dearest, young lady, you grow every day more like your mother!"—"The likeness is very striking, I believe, indeed, Agnes," returned Magdalena, "if I may judge by the effect it had this evening on Sir Eustace Willoughby."—

"Sir Eustace Willoughby! you have seen him then, madam?"

"Ah, yes!" sighed Magdalena, "I have seen him!"

"No doubt," replied Agnes; "he is greatly altered! Ah, he was a noble youth! and of such a heavenly temper! He was, too surely he was, greatly wronged; but resentment never had power to make *him* harsh and revengeful. Oh, how he pleaded to my lord; how he begged him to forgive the past! But oh, such cruel vows, such bitter imprecations! The fine youth could not bear to hear them, though against a man who had injured him: he left Scotland, where we then were, and shut himself up entirely at West-hay for many months, though once he came to Ross-glen; but my Lord would not let him see my young lady, and he returned to West-hay, till after you were born, my dear young lady,—till after the death of your mother. Then, when my Lord, bowed down with trouble, took to his bed, and that shocking delirium seized him, when I thought he never would regain his reason,—then the good Sir Eustace returned; and

O! what torrents of tears he shed over you; how many thousand times he clasped you to his heart like the tenderest parent, and vowed ever to love and cherish the child of his Horatia!"—Her own tears and those of Magdalena fell profusely at this affecting recital. They had imperceptibly drawn into a little arched way, which led from the gallery where they first had met, and leaning against the seat of the high window which lighted it, both forgot that time was wearing on, and total darkness approaching.

"When my Lord began to recover," continued Agnes, "he seemed pleased at seeing you in Sir Eustace's arms, and we thought he fancied you his child; but when his recollection returned more perfectly, he began to look upon you with gloomy dislike, and often would not endure you in his sight. At last a new idea seized his still disordered imagination; most probably you know what it was. Before me he said any

thing; I was witness to all his fancies, all his resolutions; and I soon learnt on what your future fate, and the clearing of my dear young lady's fame depended; that made me warn you so often to be in all things obedient; that made me say what I did, the morning on which that good and handsome young lord breakfasted here! I hope —I hope—the warning was unnecessary!"

Magdalena stifled a sigh, and remained silent. Agnes sighed also, and said, "All will, I hope, be well; all will end happily! Sir Eustace is no longer very young, but he is still in the prime of life; perhaps his person may not be so handsome as it was, but person, my dear young lady, in a man ought not to be considered: good and amiable I am sure he must always be; and since you cannot have seen any body——at least, not *much* of any body"——She stopped confused, and both were again silent.

Magdalena now, casting her eyes around, perceived that she stood within the very archway whither she had turned on the night of Mrs. Dennis's illness, and which led to the apartment of her mother. She started, and putting her hand on the arm of Agnes, said, "Now, perhaps, my good Agnes, you will indulge me in a wish which has long been pressing on my heart. I have nothing more to learn; all the past has been related to me, for all the future I am prepared! Will you, then, my good old friend, will you permit me to visit that chamber, that hallowed chamber which once before I saw; where my poor mother drew her last, and I my first, breath!"—"Oh, my dear young lady," said Agnes; "why do you ask me? I cannot tell how to refuse you; yet, why visit such a dismal scene! It can do you no good?"——"Yes, yes, it will," replied Magdalena, eagerly; "it will arm me with fresh resolution; give life and animation to

my courage. On the spot where my mother died I will renew my vows of devoting myself, of sacrificing every thing, if only thus her name can be rescued from doubt and from reproach! We are, I perceive, near the door; I have never lost the remembrance of it; and even in this faint light I could, I am sure, find my way to every object that room contains, so strongly is their idea impressed upon my memory."

"Well, my dear young lady," said Agnes, "if you will have it so, I must comply; it is late now, and my Lord will soon cross the gallery to go to his room: he will not perhaps be pleased to see us here."

"Then I will go to my room," answered Magdalena, "for half an hour; at the end of that time he will be gone to bed; come to me, and I will tell Mrs. Dennis you are going to show me a room I wish to see; she will ask no questions, and we will go together." Agnes promised to obey her, and for

the present they parted. At the end of about half an hour the old housekeeper returned; and Mrs. Dennis not objecting, Magdalena went with her. It was now entirely dark, and shading her candle with her hand, the trembling old woman preceded her young lady to the melancholy and deserted apartment she had so long wished to revisit. "Don't think, my dear Miss," said Agnes, "I tremble through fear; No, I could go to this room, or any room in the castle, at any hour of the night, without being afraid: even the very night when I met you here, and really thought you were my beloved young lady's ghost, I was not afraid, only awe-struck, as I may say, and grieved to think what should have called her from her rest again!"

They now entered the bed-room, and Magdalena motioned to Agnes, for she was too much affected to speak, to draw her mother's picture from its concealment. Agnes obeyed, and wiped

away the dust which obscured it. "It is as fresh as ever," she said, "and as much like you, my dear young lady, as it is like your mamma, only the mouth is not the same; your mouth and smile are like"——

"Like whose?" enquired Magdalena, eagerly. "One—ah, Miss! One that"——"My father?" "Yes! your father!" "Ah, you know his name! Oh Agnes, tell me!"

"My dearest young lady, I must not, I dare not! My lord made me take a solemn oath, never to repeat it till he gave me leave; never to disclose some parts of the conversation I witnessed in this very place between him and my dear mistress: I supported her, for she was so weak she could not sit upright. Oh, how the dear angel entreated for the babe she showed him! that h[e] would not extend to its innocent he[ad] the heavy curse, which, with horro[r I] heard him pronounce on its fath[er.] At last she prevailed on him to

mise it his protection; but only on condition that it should be *his* without appeal, and as long as it should be in every thing obedient. 'She will be obedient,' said the dying lady. 'Oh, my babe, live to atone for my errors, to console those I have made miserable, to soothe the declining age of that venerable parent whose peace I have destroyed! Oh, at this aweful moment how do the vain illusions of passion fade away! Be not misled by them, my child; live to *be obedient and to be happy!*'" "And for all this I will live!" said Magdalena, falling on her knees, "for this and this only! to fulfil my mother's dying commands, to atone, as far as possible, for her errors, to rescue her fame from obloquy,--her memory from reproach! Oh, why had I not heard all this earlier, why had I not ...nown it, before to obey—become a ...ifice so painful! But it is over! ...ceforth no wish, no passion shall

come in competition with thy desires, oh dear, and ever-lamented mother."

To this tender, this enthusiastic promise, the tears and sobs of Agnes were the only reply. Magdalena, now rising with dignified composure from her knees, examined afresh the lovely portrait of her mother, the little cradle in which her own infant form had first reposed, and every dear and interesting memorial of her departed parent. "I have her tablets," she said; "I found them the night on which I strayed hither before." "Ah, those tablets," said Agnes; "from a child she valued them; they were an early gift from Sir Eustace Willoughby; and at Ross-glen and here, after my Lord shut her up, she was frequently writing in them. Poor dear lady, I often wondered how she kept her senses! for my Lord was very, very harsh!—and used to say such things! Then after Mr. —— after the poor gentleman ceased to try to

see, or to write to her, the shocking suspense she was in as to what became of him—though I. hope she never could have heard the——but my lord was so cruel to her!"

"Dreadful!" replied Magdalena; "and could no one ever conjecture?"

"Don't let us talk any more of it!" said Agnes, turning excessively pale; "I cannot bear it! especially *here*—— Dear young lady, let us go!"——And Magdalena seeing the poor old woman quite overcome by painful remembrances, though she did not at that time know their extent, consented to leave the dismal scene, which so powerfully recalled them; and returned to her own apartment.

Wild dreams crowded on Magdalena's imagination:——her mother, Sir Eustace Willoughby, Lord Ennersdale glided across her fancy as she slept; to these succeeded Reginald and Isabella, both of whom looked on her angrily; and when she

would have accosted them as usual, pushed her away, and told her she was no longer dear to them! Tears streaming down her cheeks awakened her; she slept again, and now Sir Eustace Willoughby and herself stood before the altar, in the private chapel of the castle; suddenly the gates of the railing, which separated it from the burial place, were thrown open with a tremendous crash!—The shadowy figure of Horatia ascended from her monument, and came with noiseless step towards them, with a hand so cold, that the touch, like marble, seemed to chill her whole frame; Magdalena thought the awful form snatched her hand from that of Sir Eustace, and pointed to a distant groupe of figures. Confused and indistinct sounds and images succeeded; but soon the whole chapel became illuminated, and filled with the most harmonious sounds. At the imaginary concert she awoke, and with difficulty she convinced herself the

whole wild illusion was but a dream! The first rays of the rising sun seemed, to her deeply impressed fancy, the brilliant illumination she had seen in her sleep; and, starting with a sigh, she shook off with difficulty the delusive hopes her strange dreams had inspired!

CHAP. V.

THE reflections of her waking hours confirmed Magdalena in the resolution she had formed on the solemn spot where her mother had so devoted her to the will of Lord Ennersdale: nevertheless the account which Agnes had given of the generous forbearance, and gentle nature of Sir Eustace Willoughby, probably inspired a vague hope of which she was herself hardly sensible, and certainly did not indulge,

that he might, on his side, decline a union which she thought he must soon perceive was not to her desirable.

"How," she thought, "can I do more than dissemble my reluctance?—To feign that species of attachment which surely a mind so delicate must require, from the woman he means to make his wife, is impossible. Will Sir Eustace be contented with a mere cold assent? Will he not perceive, though my lips do not avow it, how painful to my heart, how contrary to my wishes, is this marriage?—Besides, why should I suppose he must himself desire it?—My likeness to one formerly so dearly loved may certainly interest him, but surely his regard will rather be the affection of a parent, than the tenderness of a lover? At all events he will give me time, and time may produce some unexpected change!"

So hopes, so reasons the youthful mind. Nor is the conclusion always fallacious: so many sudden alterations,

so many extraordinary occurrences certainly do take place in the drama of real life, that none should despair, or look forward to any event as inevitable.

Composing her mind by these reflections, and by the determination of acting with that resolution which might convince Lord Ennersdale, she meant implicitly to keep her promises with him, Magdalena prepared for her visit to West-hay; she "*schooled her eyes and her heart*," and assumed as much as she could, the semblance of quiet though not of chearfulness. Lord Ennersdale put her into the carriage, and followed her in silence: they took the same road, with which she recollected to have been only a few months before so delighted; when the elastic joyousness of youthful feelings made her exclaim, "How beautiful is the world!" Alas!—It was still the same world, enriched and adorned by the most brilliant summer sun, by the ac-

complishment of that full harvest, which then was only promised!—The lovely Eden rolled on in calm tranquillity, or hastened its course with unabated animation; but ah!—The bounding heart, which then hailed the enchanting scene with rapture, was now weighed down with an unacknowledged load of sorrow; the eyes which, bright with joy, had then wandered, delighted, over the landscape, now dimmed with tears, and weary with watching, gazed on all with indifference!—

On approaching the house, Magdalena found that all in its vicinity, had assumed an appearance of recent attention; the front had been newly painted, the lawn was in the most exquisite order; green-house plants, on light and elegant stands, filled the air with their rich perfumes; and every circumstance shewed that a superior taste had directed the efforts of the servants and workmen.

On the river, which within view of

the windows spread into a calm expanse, a pleasure barge highly ornamented was visible; in short, every thing seemed to have been thought of which could render this magnificent abode desirable.

On alighting they were shewn into the breakfast-room, where they found Lady Piercefield and the eldest of her daughters, the former netting, the latter employed, Magdalena could not guess in what manner, till after a few minutes observation she found it was modelling in wax: a fine antique bust of Cleopatra, with the asp, stood before her, which she appeared to be copying with great accuracy and taste. She half rose as Lord Ennersdale presented Miss Melrose to her, greeted him with a cold smile, bowed slightly to her; and again, casting her eyes on her employment, became entirely silent. A folio book of fine prints lay near her, with the implements for drawing; some books on Botany, a Hortus Siccus,

with three or four specimens of plants, spread out for drying, were also on the table: and Magdalena, in the midst of her own anxious thoughts, could not help anticipating pleasure from the society of a young person who appeared to possess so much knowledge. Nor was the appearance all; for Miss Arlington really had acquired considerable information, as well as many accomplishments; but, except to her own particular set, or persons of high rank, she never condescended to make them either useful or agreeable. Cold-hearted, proud, and contracted in her sentiments, she drew around herself a line of entrenchment, over which no one was permitted to step who had not the pass-word.

Lady Piercefield, good-natured, lively, and well-bred, received Miss Melrose far more graciously; she had married very young and was at this time under forty: her dress, which, though by no means out of character,

was not yet calculated to give her every advantage, made her look still younger; and Magdalena could hardly believe her the mother of Miss Arlington, whose complexion, which, though very fair, was somewhat pale, and chilling expression of countenance, gave her the appearance of being older than she really was.

Lady Piercefield, knew that Sir Eustace had once been engaged to a daughter of Lord Ennersdale, and that the match had been suddenly, and to his great sorrow, broken off; but as she was at the time at the court of—— whither she had accompanied Lord Piercefield, who, immediately after their marriage, went thither in a diplomatic capacity, she had never heard the particulars; nor indeed had she, till very lately, seen her brother since those affecting events took place: she had, therefore, no idea who Magdalena really was, or of the conditional sort of engagement into which Sir Eustace

had entered with Lord Ennersdale; for, as such *he* considered it, though the Earl, unknown to him, had taken such strong measures to ensure its fulfilment.

Lady Piercefield thought Magdalena extremely beautiful, and was not displeased with that air of timidity, so natural to one, who had, she understood, been very much secluded; but which, her naturally fine form, and the gracefulness of her movements, prevented from degenerating into awkwardness or rusticity. After speaking to her in a kind tone two or three little common-place sentences, Lady Piercefield entered into chat with Lord Ennersdale, making many enquiries for those she had formerly known in the neighbourhood, particularly Sir Jerome Macartney, Doctor Parry, (whom she characterized as one of the best men in the world) and Lord Milbank's family; reverting, with great good humour, to little anecdotes which had happened in

her girlish days, when once or twice she had spent the summer recess from school at West-hay, and appearing to receive great pleasure from the recollection. This kind of chat, however amusing to those partaking in it, and who may be supposed mutually interested in the subject, affords very little entertainment for those who sit by; and Magdalena's sole employment for the next quarter of an hour was that of watching Miss Arlington's light and nimble fingers, as she worked the plastic wax into the form she wished it to take, never once moving her eyes from that, except to cast them on the bust she was modelling from, nor opening her lips, which the interest she took in her employment drew unusually close together, to greet the young and timid stranger, by one gentle smile, one encouraging word!—Gladly would Magdalena have entered into conversation, had it been only to allay the tumultuous workings of her mind,

as she anticipated the appearance of Sir Eustace; and looked forward with a thousand uneasy apprehensions, on that futurity, which seemed, however dimly, to be spread before her. The name of Lord Milbank, which she once or twice heard Lady Piercefield repeat, called up those painful, those almost insupportable recollections, with which it was always associated in her mind; and a soft, half-stifled sigh, drew towards her the attention of Lady Piercefield, who was too well-bred not to perceive with concern, though she affected not to observe it, the reserve and coldness of Miss Arlington.

"My dear Miss Melrose," she said, "are you fond of fine prints? Those, I believe, are almost invaluable. Or perhaps you would like to sit nearer Miss Arlington, and examine her work; Matilda, shew it to Miss Melrose."—Magdalena rose from her seat to comply with the obliging proposal, when Miss Arlington coldly said, "It is not

finished enough yet, to give pleasure to any one; and I never can work if any body looks over me."—Magdalena, thus left standing between the sopha, from which she had risen, and the table, towards which this speech had repelled her advance, now felt extremely uncomfortable; her cheeks were instantly covered with blushes, and Lady Piercefield coloured with vexation. "Miss Melrose," said her Ladyship, "will you forgive me, if I request you to pull the bell; the cord is so near you, I am sure you will excuse me for troubling you." Magdalena, grateful for the little employment, which she easily guest was intended to relieve her from her momentary embarrassment, readily complied; and then, feeling as if she had not risen entirely without an object, returned towards the sopha table, which stood before Lady Piercefield, and taking up one of the books of prints, said, "Your Ladyship, I think, was so good

as to permit me to examine these?"

"Certainly, my dear, certainly," replied Lady Piercefield, pleased with the natural ease of manner, which, in Magealena, had supplied the want of that usage de compagnié; a deficiency in which would have left many girls standing upright in the middle of the room, looking awkward, and not knowing what to do next.

A servant answering the bell, Lady Piercefield asked if Sir Eustace had been informed of Lord Ennersdale's arrival! "Sir Eustace was gone to look at the new conservatory, my lady, with Counsellor Andrews and Captain Barton, when Lord Ennersdale arrived; he is this moment come in, and will be here immediately." "And where are Miss Devereux and Miss Henrietta Arlington?" "Miss Henrietta, my lady, I believe, came in from the stable-yard just now; I don't know where Miss Devereux is."——As he spoke two folding doors flew open, and dis-

covered a billiard room adjoining, out of which, in a step something between a jump and a rún, came a lovely girl, with a brunette complexion, large brilliant dark eyes, and a form which seemed to unite extraordinary suppleness and agility, with the most perfect ease and grace.—

" *Her hair was black, and dark her eye;
" Her cheeks had stol'n the richest dye,
" That paints the damask rose;
" Unrivall'd, save by lips as red
" As coral, in its native bed,
" The spark'ling ocean glows;
" And her dark skin, of finest grain,
" Tho' the warm sun with millow stain
" Had mark'd her for its own,
" Flush'd the bright hue of joy or pain,
" And told each feeling's throb, as plain,
" As if it matched the swan's white down!"

She held in her hand one of the cues belonging to the billiard table; and as she sprung into the room she exclaimed, " Congratulate me, dear Lady

* Blanche, by Miss Mitford.

Piercefield, I have beaten him, and I hope I shall beat Sir Eustace soon!" She was followed by a very young man, and an elderly lady; the gentleman said, laughing, "Yes, I am beaten, Lady Piercefield; who would not be proud to be conquered by Miss Devereux." "How elegant!" said the young lady, affecting to courtesy; "but pray, my lord, when you want to make fine speeches, do let them be a little less common-place! If Homer, and Ovid, and all the fine old Grecians, you have been studying, at Eton and Oxford, will not suggest any brilliant ideas, turn to *our* poets, read Hafez, and —"

Here, seeing strangers, she gathered herself into an attitude somewhat more restrained; and approaching Miss Arlington, exclaimed, "Bless me, Miss Arlington! what, still twisting and twirling that tiresome bit of wax? I do believe you have been at it this hour: how can you sit still so long? I de-

'clare I should not wonder, if one of these days you were to stiffen as you sat, into a fine marble statue, for somebody else to model from! Upon my word, you would look very well as a new effigy to stick up in Westminster abbey, for the lady who died a martyr to industry, by wounding her finger with her needle!"

The eye, the smile, which pointed this satirical observation, were so irresistibly comic, that not one of the party could restrain a laugh; and Lord Charles Sedly, the young man, who had entered the room with Miss Devereux, went from one to the other, laughing and exclaiming, "Very well, faith; excellent upon my soul; what a wit she is! How clever!" not recollecting, that by praising Miss Devereux, he was exaggerating the ridicule, under which Miss Arlington, and on her account Lady Piercefield suffered. Miss Arlington gave him a look of scorn, which was intended to petrify

him, at least, whatever fate might be prepared for herself; and Miss Devereux said, "Now, Lord Charles, you really will oblige me very much, if you never will praise me any more!"

"Lord! Miss Devereux, why?"

"Because, when you do, you always give me the unpleasant sensation of knowing I have done something wrong, or said something foolish!"

"My dear Victoria!" said Lady Piercefield, reproachfully. "Oh, Miss Devereux is extremely polite to every body," said Miss Arlington, with a sneer; "but I thought her undoubted champion, Lord Charles, might have escaped!" "*My* champion!" answered Miss Devereux, laughing, yet contemptuously; "*that* speech is ten thousand times more severe than any thing I ever said in my life! To what am I reduced!" "Upon my word, ladies," said Lord Charles, shrugging his shoulders, with an air of mortification; "you really oppress me with compliments!

Lady Piercefield, have you no compassion? Do assist me!" "No, indeed," replied Lady Piercefield; "you are deservedly punished, for complimenting one lady on wit, exerted to the annoyance of another." "Oh, Lady Piercefield, my dear Lady Piercefield," said Miss Devereux, her cheeks overspread with a bright flush; "I am sure, if *you* disapprove, I have done wrong; nay, I would ask Miss Arlington's pardon, but that I know she holds me and my poor little wit in equal contempt. But here comes my guardian! Oh, now I will behave well in good earnest." "I am sure, then," drawled Miss Arlington, in her cold sententious manner, "we have all reason to wish Sir Eustace were to be always at your side." "Oh, do wish it! Do wish it!" repeated Miss Devereux; "it would be kinder than any wish you ever formed in my favour yet!" "Sir Eustace is very happy to be so desirable a companion in the opinion of the

bright Victoria!" said Lord Charles, with an ill-disguised air of pique. "Pray, my lord," replied she; "do talk of something or somebody, you have *a chance* of understanding!" "I thought, Victoria," said Lady Piercefield, "you were going to behave well; but here comes my brother."

Lord Ennersdale and Magdalena now rose to receive Sir Eustace. As he spoke to the latter, she saw that tremulous motion of the lip, which denotes suppress agitation; but he seemed to have been using his utmost exertion to repel all appearance of emotion: he took her hand gently, and, in the usual mode of compliment, hoped she was well; then turning to Lady Piercefield, he said, "I hope, sister, you have presented Miss Melrose and Miss Devereux to each other?"

"Not yet," said Lady Piercefield; "for, since Miss Devereux entered, we have had such a "*keen encounter of their wit*;" between her, Matilda, and

Lord Charles, as has left space for nothing else." "Oh, pray, Lady Piercefield, leave *me* out," said Lord Charles; "I am sure *I* had no share in it!" "In the wit, my lord?" said Miss Devereux, curling her lip, "did any one suspect you?"

Sir Eustace turned his eyes upon her, and gently said, "Victoria!" instantly the lovely girl stood abashed before him; her bright eyes fell, her cheek was covered with a rich carmine flush, and the striking animation of her air vanished. She was retiring behind Lady Piercefield, to hide her discomfiture from the triumphant eyes of the smiling Miss Arlington; who, pleased at her mortification, even stopped her modelling for a moment, and looked up; when Sir Eustace advancing, took Victoria's hand, and said, "Then, let *me* have the pleasure of introducing you to each other; Miss Melrose, Miss Devereux, you seem

born to be friends, and I hope will long remain so."

Miss Devereux, now throwing aside her volatile spirits, seemed to observe something in the colour of Magdalena's face, which excited a more tender feeling; she took her hand, and said, "Sir Eustace is too good to me, he always is; I fear the specimen I have given this morning, of my character, will not incline Miss Melrose to your opinion, sir; she looks too gentle, and too good natured, to call such a giddy creature, *friend*." "Have you, then, Victoria," said Sir Eustace, "been indulging your wit too much, at the expence of good nature?" "Not exactly of good nature," she answered, blushing, "but perhaps of politeness." "There only is Miss Devereux ever wrong," said Sir Eustace to Magdalena. "I think the gentleness, and apparent tenderness of Miss Melrose's manners and feelings, well calculated, Victoria, to cure your only fault." "My only fault!" she re-

turned with quickness; "Oh, not by ten thousand! You do not know half my faults and follies! For some of them," she added, in a tone so low, that only Magdalena heard her, "I pay dearly enough!"

Lady Piercefield now addressed some trifling question to Magdalena; and, at the sound of her voice, as she answered, Sir Eustace, who, at a little distance, was talking to Lord Ennersdale, again thrown off his guard, started, turned round, and, fixing his eyes on her for an instant, became excessively pale, and seemed almost sinking to the earth. "Oh, how pale!" exclaimed Miss Devereux, starting from her seat; "he is ill, I am sure! Sir Eustace, what is the matter?" "Nothing, Victoria; a trifle," he replied, recovering himself; "I have stood too long in the sun, that is all." Again, Miss Arlington's eye of observation was cast upon Victoria, and she murmured to Lord Charles, who, repulsed by Miss Devereux, had

now attached himself to her—"Pretty! How interesting!" A warm reply seemed to hover on Victoria's lips; her eyes, those eyes, so formed to express every emotion of a heart without disguise, were cast upon Miss Arlington with a lightening glance of indignant scorn; but, turning to Magdalena, and reseating herself, she said, "Dear Miss Melrose, do teach me, as Sir Eustace says, to be as good and gentle as yourself!" "Ah," replied Magdalena; "I, who know nothing, am ill qualified to teach; and, even if I could, I should never know how to wish you other than I have seen you!" "Flatterer!" replied Victoria, with a smile, so bright, so enchanting, as completely won Magdalena's heart, who was delighted with the singular naivetè, and undisguised warmth of character of this lovely girl; and her smile she felt to be the counterpart of that Petrarch describes, as

Lampeggior del angelico riso!

The sandwich tray was now brought in; and an enquiry set on foot, as to what was become of Henrietta. "Who can tell," asked Miss Arlington, with a tone of cold contempt; "does any one know her present fancy? Lord Charles, perhaps you can inform us, where to

"Catch, ere she change, this Cynthia of a minute?"

"Not I, I'm sure," looking half alarmed, answered Lord Charles; who, if addressed in any phrase at all above common place, always looked as if he fancied some attack was making on his intellectual powers, in order to render him ridiculous; "I am not at all likely to know any thing about Miss Henrietta!"

"Why not?" asked Miss Devereux, "*sometimes* she visits the *stable*, and *sometimes* plays *battledore!*"

"Yes," replied Lord Charles, not in the least perceiving the implied satire; "but she says, Sir Eustace has not a good horse in his stud, *for all* he gave

so much for Syphax and Burlington; and I think they are famous horses; to be sure, Syphax is not quite so well made about the shoulder as Burlington, but all his other points are superior; however, Miss Henrietta says neither of them is equal to Mr. Fanshawe's Roland, and so I don't suppose she is gone to the stables; and as to battledore, she says, its too hot—the weather, I mean —— but hang me!" added he, looking up, and catching the supprest smile on Victoria's lips; "if I don't believe you are quizzing me all this time, Miss Devereux!"

"No! do you really?" she returned, in a tone so droll, that all but Sir Eustace, who was not pleased at her satirical humour, and Miss Arlington, who made a point of never smiling at her sallies, laughed, and poor Lord Charles had no resource to hide his mortification, but whistling, and kicking his heels against the frame of his chair for some minutes; he then rose, yawned,

stretched, said it was too warm to walk, and too early to dress, and seizing Captain Barton's arm, who had just before entered, said he should go and play at billiards.

Miss Devereux and Magdalena now entered into a quiet conversation, in which the latter found her companion full of taste and elegance; all her lively sallies and satirical expressions were laid aside, and the whole tone of her language was modest, conciliating, and perfectly feminine. "What an enchanting creature," thought Magdalena; "how delightful must such a variety of character render her."

In about half an hour, Lady Piercefield, who had been chatting with the rest of the party, rose and said, "I must write a letter before I make my toilette, Victoria; will you take charge of Miss Melrose? My dear, I am rejoiced to find, that you and Lord Ennersdale dine with us." Magdalena hesitated, and cast an apologizing

glance on her dress, which was a simple white morning robe. "Oh, you are as nice as possible," said Lady Piercefield, interpreting her looks; "we dine quite en famille to-day; and Henrietta's or Miss Devereux's maid will arrange your hair." "Oh, I will do it myself," exclaimed the eager Victoria; "Johnson shall not touch it!— I see, even under the shade of the bonnet, how beautiful it is; such hair, and such a face, require a classical adjustment. Miss Melrose shall go to my dressing-room; you shall see how I will embellish her."

"I thought *you* talked of flattery, just now!" said Magdalena, with a soft smile, and in a very low tone. "Oh, she does not flatter you," said Lady Piercefield, overhearing her; "if she thought you *ugly* she would tell you so!" "No, not quite so bad as that, Lady Piercefield," answered Miss Devereux; "only—in that case, Johnson, or any body else, might dress her." She

was then carrying off Magdalena, when Lady Piercefield stopped them, by saying, "You need not go to dress yet; Miss Melrose would like to see part of the house perhaps; the new rooms look best at this time of the day; possibly, in your ramble, you may find Henrietta; do remind her that we shall dine some time or other, or she will not be dressed till midnight."

So elegant were the dresses of all the ladies, that Magdalena could hardly guess what could be added to the fine muslin, lace, coral, and Cornelian ornaments, with which they were adorned; or why, in the country, and with only a family party, it was necessary to change their attire because the clock struck a particular hour.

"Now, I'll tell you what, my dear Miss Melrose," said Victoria, as arm in arm they quitted the breakfast room; "I know it is very unpleasant to feel oneself too little, or too much, dressed; and you will see, by and bye, Lady

Piercefield, and the Miss Arlingtons, dressed, as if they were going to the Opera; they always do it every where; and I know you will not feel comfortable in your high morning robe; we are just of a size, do indulge me, by wearing one of my frocks, and let me dress you; you cannot think how delighted I shall be." "Indeed," said Magdalena; "I am so uninstructed in all forms and usages, so wholly unaccustomed to company, or even to see other young people, that I only guess what I ought to wear; and as I have hitherto had no regular attendant, I have no one to assist or direct me." "Your *guess*, for the morning, then, was admirable; but, as it is late, instead of sending to your house, Ennersdale, do, you call it?"—"No, Delamere."

"Well, Delamere,—you must let me attire you for dinner, as I please; I have trunks full of frocks, which have never been seen, so they will not know

but that we sent to Delamere for one of your own."

"You are very good —— but —— a stranger ——" "*Are* we strangers?" said Victoria, with one of her brilliant smiles; "I had forgotten it!"

"Every one must feel towards you, just as you would wish them to do!" said Magdalena.

"Must they? Then you and I are *not* strangers!" "Charming creature!" again Magdalena repeated to herself.

They now went through the new suite of rooms, which were furnished with every thing wealth could purchase, or art and luxury contrive. "They are very beautiful!" said Magdalena; "I am no judge, but the taste in every thing appears to me perfect."

"Oh, no wonder! Sir Eustace directed the whole. I am surprised to see how much pains he has taken with every thing about West-bay; he who has, till within these three months, appeared so indifferent to every thing!"

Magdalena could too well account for what struck Miss Devereux, as so extraordinary; she did not, however, disclose her thoughts; but, with some hesitation, said, "You have known Sir Eustace sometime?"

"Oh, yes, these two years; ever since I went back to India from school."

"To India! Has Sir Eustace been in India?"

"Did you not know it? And he speaks of Lord Ennersdale as his first friend! And prepared us to see his ward, as if he were much interested about her."

"Sir Eustace, I believe," answered Magdalena, somewhat confused, "knew my parents; I knew he had been a great traveller, but did not know he had visited India."

"Yes, he resided there five or six years. I have heard, that in his youth he met with a severe disappointment in love; if I mistake not, from a daughter of Lord Ennersdale's. He chose to

travel, and first visited the northern court, afterwards he took a voyage to Turkey, and went to Athens, and the Grecian islands, then his restless fancy, perhaps, I ought more properly to say, his aching heart, prompted him to visit the Cape of Good Hope, and make some journeys into the interior: in these various wanderings he spent several years, and went from the Cape to India; there he became intimately acquainted with my father; I was in England for education; my father, finding his health declining, sent for me a year sooner than was intended: my mother died while I was an infant. My father!——You see——I am not quite out of mourning."——She stopped, sighed, and a tear fell on the beautiful hand which kindly held Magdalena's within its velvet fold.——"My poor father," she went on, "entreated Sir Eustace to take the guardianship of his daughter and her rupees. The excellent, the——but pardon me—Sir Eustate complied; he

brought me to England, having placed me on the passage under the care of a respectable officer's widow, who was glad to make the voyage with us; and he has now obtained for me the protection of Lady Piercefield. Thus you have my little history; yours you must give me another time; I have a notion, by the expression of that fair face, it is an interesting one. But we are come to the last room in the suite, the library." She threw open the door of a magnificent apartment; it was dome-shaped, and lighted from the top, the lower part of the dome painted in the most exquisite manner, with figures of Apollo and the Muses, and other classical ornaments: the lower part was divided into compartments, covered with gilt net-work cases, enclosing books of every size, and in every various kind of binding, between each case stood, on one side, fine busts of Homer, Hesiod, Plato, and the other great writers of antiquity; and on the other

our own Shakspeare, Milton, Spencer, &c. &c. Library tables of every description, covered with books and portfolios, some shut, some open, and displaying maps and prints; in short, every modern contrivance, that gives facility and comfort, either to the reader or writer, were here to be found in abundance.

In the middle of the room, on a very low ottoman, and forming with her knees a sort of reading desk for a quarto volume, which she was attentively perusing, sat a lady, who was too much engaged with her studies, even to lift up her eyes at their entrance. She wore a very plain morning dress, very much draggled round the skirt, a large straw bonnet over a close cap, beneath which, a few *very dark* curls alone were visible on her forehead; a loose shawl, half falling off her shoulders, and a pair of thick, dirty half-boots, completed her costume.——"Henrietta!" exclaimed Miss Devereux; "for goodness sake,

how long have you been here! Do you know, it wants but half an hour of dinner time?" Not a word!

"Henrietta!" she reiterated, in a louder tone; "now do look up, and hear me; I tell you it is just dinner time!" "Be quiet! I shall not eat any dinner!" she returned, still not looking up. "Nonsense!" said Miss Devereux, laughing; "why, I know you were not to be found when the sandwich tray came in, do you mean to starve yourself?"

"Be quiet! How teazing you are! I tell you, I am not hungry! Now, do go away, there's a dear girl!"

"Henrietta! I have had a famous game at billiards, with Lord Charles."

"Billiards!" exclaimed Henrietta, suddenly looking up; "why did you not call me?" "I thought I should rouse you!" said Miss Devereux, indulging in a fit of laughing; "but pray, tell me how I was to guess where to find you?"

Henrietta had by this time perceived, that Victoria was accompanied by a stranger; she fixed a pair of penetrating eyes, for an instant, on Magdalena, and then said, "I concluded you had only Captain Barton, or old Mrs. Fairfax, with you; why did you not tell me, Victoria, you were accompanied by a stranger?" "Pray, how was I to make you hear, Henrietta? 'Tis Miss Melrose; Miss Melrose, this well-dressed young lady is Miss Henrietta Arlington!"—

"Nonsense!" cried Henrietta; "who cares about dress!. I wish to heaven, Mamma and Matilda hated it as much as I do."

"Yes, just now; but how long is that to last?" Henrietta was again buried in her studies, and appeared not to hear a syllable that was said.

"Henrietta! Henrietta!" said Miss Devereux; "was there ever such another girl! Come, now do come and dress! You know how angry Lady

Piercefield will be! "What are you reading?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Henrietta, rising suddenly, and throwing the book on the table, with a violence which made the dome echo, "what a shocking torment you are! Lord, how I am cramped, sitting so long on that vile little ottoman!—Reading! Why, I first set myself to read Maurice's Indian Antiquities, and sat two or three hours, I believe, absorbed in it, till I fancied myself surrounded by all the hideous gods of the wild Hindoo Mythology; then I happened to lay my hand on this new poem, another of Scott's exquisite performances; I had not seen it before. Have *you* read it? Do you think it equal to Marmion?" said she, turning abruptly to Magdalena, and fixing her quick, sensible eyes upon her, who, blushing at her own ignorance, was obliged to acknowledge, she knew nothing of either. "Don't you like poetry?" asked Henrietta. "The few

poems Lord Ennersdale has permitted me to read, have given me exquisite pleasure," she answered. "And has he *not* permitted you to read Marmion?" said Henrietta; "I thought the most fastidious parent or guardian could not have excepted against one word in it!" "I never presume to ask his reasons for consent or refusal," replied Magdalena; "but of the poem you mention I never heard." "Oh, then we will ask Lord Ennersdale to allow you to take it home with you; in the mean time, you must hear this one inimitable passage."

She snatched up the poem, which, with many others, lay on a table, and read, with just and affecting emphasis and tone, the scene in the *Hostel*, and Fitz-Eustace's song. The concluding denunciation against "him, the deceiver!" struck painfully on Magdalena's heart; we are all apt to resolve any passing occurrence, or apparent similarity of sentiment, into an allusion to

whatever subject deeply interests us, and she shuddered, as she asked herself, whether her own father had come within the limit of this forcible description?"

The first dinner bell, now sounding loudly, obliged the ladies to separate; Henrietta declared she should be ready in ten minutes, and scampered off; Magdalena thought her very odd, but was pleased with her literary taste, and the elegance with which she read, and infinitely prefered her to the cold and haughty Miss Arlington.

CHAP. VI.

MAGDALENA and her new friend now proceeded to the dressing-room of the latter, where they found Mrs. Johnson, a middle-aged steady woman, impatiently waiting the arrival of her

young lady. "Be quick, Johnson," said Miss Devereux; "take out the first thing you come to, and dress me, for I am going to dress Miss Melrose myself; don't look grave, I know that nobody could do it better than you, but it's a whim of mine. Come, twist up my hair," she added, shaking back a profusion of bright black tresses; "no matter how, and leave me to arrange la plus belle-cheveluse de monde!" While speaking she had removed Magdalena's bonnet, and now let down her luxuriant hair, with the question, "Did you ever see any thing so beautiful?"

Mrs. Johnson speedily arranged Miss Devereux's dress, about which she appeared comparatively careless; and, indeed, might well be so, for her beauty, and the air of fashion which characterized her, made every thing look well upon her: she now proceeded herself, to decorate Magdalena: and the simple Grecian style, into which she modelled

her hair, so perfectly harmonized, with the fine formation of her head and shoulders, and the turn of her countenance, as to call forth new beauties. She selected from her abundant wardrobe, an elegant dress, which she insisted on Magdalena's wearing; it was composed of the finest produce of the looms of India, and they were so nearly of a size, that it seemed as if it had been made for her.—When both were attired, the two charming girls stood gazing, for half a minute, with genuine admiration, on each other, both thinking they had never before seen any thing so lovely; even Isabella's beauty, which she had hitherto appreciated so highly, Magdalena could not help owning, did not equal that of the elegant, animated Victoria. The last dinner bell ringing, they now hastened to the dining-saloon, where they already found all the rest of the party assembled. Lady Piercefield, and Miss Arlington, were, as Victoria had foretold,

very much dressed; but there was a lady with them, in a still higher style of adornment than either, whom Magdalena supposed to be an unexpected visitor: her robe was of the palest bloom coloured sarsnet, her ornaments fine pearls, of which she had bracelets, and *armlets*, very near the shoulder, a necklace, ear-rings, and elegant ornament for the head; her dress was made in the extreme of the fashion; she was highly rouged, and a quantity of remarkably light hair was fantastically disposed in an hundred different plaits and ringlets. "Who is *that?*" whispered Magdalena. Victoria only smiled; and they took their places at the table. Magdalena supposing that Miss Henrietta Arlington had again escaped to her studies, and was not to be found. Presently Lady Piercefield said, "Henrietta, shall I send you some fish,?" "If you please, Madam," answered the stranger; and Magdalena found, from her voice, that it really

was Henrietta Arlington, but so different from the negligent figure she had seen in the library, that she could hardly credit the evidence of her senses.

The conversation at table ran much in the usual channel; amongst other things, dancing was talked of, and several of the party agreeing in their fondness for the exercise, it was proposed to dance reels in the evening. "Pray do," said Sir Eustace, who seemed eager to promote every thing that could amuse his guests; "you know, Miss Devereux, that George and David play the violin very well, and Moustapha can manage the tambourine:" He spoke of three blacks who had come in his suite from India.

"Oh, yes," answered Victoria, "I have danced many times to their music, both at Calcutta, and on ship-board."—"Should you like to dance;" she asked Magdalena, in a lower tone. "I should like it very much," she an-

swered; "but I am so unused to any thing of the kind, that I am afraid I should put you all out; I never danced in my life, except practising with my master."

"Never mind, we will soon put you in the way.——Henrietta, will you dance?"

"Not I!—I am going into the park fishing."

"Fishing!—What, in that dress?"—exclaimed Victoria.

"I had forgot my dress, but I shall change it; at least my shoes."

"That delicate coloured robe," said Miss Arlington, "will, doubtless, be much improved by an evening's fishing!—And that pearl tiara is quite in character!—"

"I know," said Henrietta, "it's the most ridiculous thing in the world to dress in this way, in the country, and hinders oneself from stirring out of doors these delicious evenings. I give you fair warning, I will not do it any

more—well!—for once I will give up my fishing, but I will get up very early in the morning, and go.—Who will be of the party?"

"I," said Lord Charles, and the other young man also agreed to join her. "Very well," she said, "I shall set out at five o'clock." "Oh, dear!" said Lord Charles; "I never can get up so early." "Then stay at home," said she; "I shall not wait a minute for any one.—Will you go, Victoria?"

"No, thank ye; its out of my way; I have no pleasure in getting wet-shod, and draggled, and going through the high grass before the dew is off in the morning!"

"You are all a great deal too *fine* to enjoy the country," re-joined Henrietta; "I wish you would have the common sense to be dressed in such a way as to be ready for any thing that offers!"

"Yet you are much more dressed than any of us," said Miss Arlington.

"Oh," replied Henrietta; "if I must do any thing; I like to do it completely. I hate mediocrity in any thing!—"

"Henrietta is right," said Sir Eustace: "if you would all wear plain dresses, except when we are going to have a formal party, we might enjoy a thousand pleasures out of doors, from which you now exclude yourselves. Come, Lady Piercefield, should it be fine, shall we have a tolerably early dinner to-morrow, and take a sail in the boat?"—"Oh, by all means," said Lady Piercefield. The young ladies were delighted with the scheme, and Lord Ennersdale and Magdalena were, as of course, included in the arrangement. "As for me," said Lord Ennersdale, "these things do not suit me; I must beg to be excused; but Magdalena may go." "Then leave her here to-night," said Lady Piercefield; "you can send her maid with some of her ward-robe, in the morning, and do

allow us to keep her a few days." Victoria's quick eye saw, by the blush on Magdalena's cheek, and the embarrassment of her air, that there was something in this proposal, which she did not exactly know how to answer, and easily divined by what she had heard in the morning, what caused her difficulty. "You will not want any servant," she said; "Johnson can wait on us both." "Thank you," said Magdalena; "to say the truth, I have no—" —"Never mind," interrupted Victoria; "I will manage for you."—She then added, aloud, "You know, Lady Piercefield I have constituted myself supreme directress of Miss Melrose's toilette, and under my orders, Johnson can very well act for both; you need not, therefore, have any other servant added to our establishment." "Very well," replied Lady Piercefield; "settle it as you like best, so long as Miss Melrose is induced to favour us." Magdalena bowed, and gratefully ac-

quiesced. "And did you preside at Miss Melrose's toilet to-day, Victoria?" asked Sir Eustace, casting a glance of admiration on Magdalena's lovely figure. "Indeed, I did, Sir Eustace; I hope you will not object to my officiating as *dame d'atour* again!" Sir Eustace bowed; but a secret compression of the heart prevented his reply by repeated efforts, and the exertion of all his mental strength, he had enabled himself to look at Magdalena, and even to hear her speak, without betraying his feelings; but these were moments in which she looked so like her mother, that his emotions almost overpowered him. The style in which Miss Devereux had arranged her hair, that hair, in colour and brightness, never matched but by the unfortunate Horatia, was very similar to that in which he had been accustomed to see Miss Delamere's disposed, (whose taste often led her to copy the antique in her dress, though not precisely the

fashion of her day;) her beautifully turned cheek, and throat, were also the counterparts of her mother's, and when she did not smile, the likeness to her father, which had from infancy tormented Lord Ennersdale, was not visible. Her eyes now accidentally met those of Sir Eustace; she saw him intently gazing at her, his brow a little contracted, his cheek pale, from the mental pain he suffered, and his benevolent eyes full of mournful admiration; as he caught her glance, a vivid, but short-lived flush, coloured his cheeks, and he hastily asked Henrietta to take wine with him, as if to conceal his confusion. "Sir Eustace is not himself to-day," said Victoria; "either he is ill, or something disturbs him; how he changes colour!" Magdalena made no reply, but she could not prevent herself from changing colour also. Victoria looked first at her, then at Sir Eustace, sighed gently, and was silent.

The evening concluded, as had been proposed, with dancing reels, in which Magdalena soon found herself perfectly at her ease. Henrietta Arlington and Lord Charles exhibited in a waltz; Lord Charles afterwards tried to prevail on Miss Devereux to dance one.

"No, never again!" she said.

"Oh, what a pity?—And you dance them so admirably, your figure is made for the waltz."

"I shall never dance another!"

"It's a pity," he answered, with a sneer, "Sir Eustace does not dance them himself; you would, I dare say, dance with *him!*"

"Sir Eustace's delicacy of taste, and propriety of judgement," she replied, "are so well known to me, that whatever he recommends, I am sure is right; whatever he discourages, wrong or foolish."

"O, if he were but a few years younger!"

"And, what then!"

"He might then hope to be so happy!"

"Sir Eustace's happiness, my Lord, does not depend on the number of his years; if he were twice as old as he is, he would always command the esteem and admiration of all who knew him; and when he was twenty years younger, I am quite sure, *he* never was a foolish boy, or an ignorant presuming coxcomb." The turn of her eye pointed her words to the youth she was addressing; he had just sense enough not to appropriate the satire by resenting it, and she turned from him with disdain.

"You are very severe upon poor Lord Charles!" said Magdalena.

"Oh, he is such an insufferable fool!—And fancies, poor little thing, that he has wit enough to make observations on the feelings of others!—I cannot command myself, when he presumes even to mention Sir Eustace Willoughby!—A man so infinitely beyond his

powers of appreciation!—Could I have my way, none but the wise and good should ever repeat so much as his name!"—"He is, indeed, very happy in your good opinion." "My good opinion!—It is too insignificant to add, in the smallest degree, to his happiness!"

"Surely," said Magdalena, "it is impossible he can be insensible to a possession so desirable!"

"Don't, my dear Magdalena," said Victoria, "run away with mistaken ideas; Sir Eustace considers me as his daughter, and I have not the presumption to suppose—to fancy—to wish—pshaw!—nonsense!—I don't know what I am talking about—that tune absolutely puts every thing else out of my head; who can withstand its influence?—"

The dancing now recommenced, and was kept up till a late hour. At ten o'clock Lord Ennersdale departed, leaving Magdalena, for the first time

in her life, to sleep out of Delamere castle.

The quick succession of objects, scenes so new, and characters so varied, during the day, had scarcely left Magdalena time for a moment's reflection. In the short pauses which had occurred, she almost wondered to find herself capable of being amused, when, at the bottom of her heart, there lay a grief so profound for the past, an anxiety so potent for the future. Such, however, is the happy constitution of the youthful mind; and whatever cause of real unhappiness there may be; however deeply that unhappiness may be felt, a girl of seventeen must, at intervals, yield up her spirits to the joys of the passing hour; when those joys are new, brilliant, and attractive; and whatever fiction may sometimes delineate, no one in real life is more or less insensible to their influence.

With night and silence, came recollection and anticipation; either suffi-

ciently powerful to retard the advances of sleep. Her thoughts reverted to Montaubrey; she compared his person, language, and manner of thinking, with those of the young men she had seen during the day, and was quite angry with herself for associating him, in her ideas for a moment, with beings so every way inferior. Sir Eustace Willoughby's manner towards her, next passed under review; she was pleased with the delicacy which led him to avoid all particularity of address, and secretly flattered herself, that although her likeness to her mother made her interesting in his eyes, he had no intention of carrying into execution the plans of Lord Ennersdale; she thought he could hardly be insensible to the visible admiration and high esteem, with which he was evidently regarded by the beautiful Victoria, and hoped his wishes might prompt him to endeavour at converting it into a sentiment still more tender. A long train

of ideas succeeded, and the morning dawn found her still revolving the circumstances of her situation; at length, quite wearied, she fell asleep, but was awakened again in less than two hours, by the noise Henrietta made, in collecting her fishing party; the unbarring, and unbolting of doors, &c. At length they all departed, and the house becoming once more quiet, Magdalena again fell asleep.

It was late, when opening her eyes, she found Victoria at her bed-side, who greeted her with great kindness, and asked, if she had not been disturbed by the restless Henrietta. "She never considers," said Victoria, "when she likes to collect an early party herself, that other people may wish to sleep. Will you take your breakfast with the family, or shall we have it together, in your dressing-room or mine?"—"Oh, by no means," answered Magdalena; "I shall be dressed in ten minutes, and should be sorry to occasion any trou-

ble." "Do just as you like; we all breakfast where and when we please; nothing is considered as extraordinary." Magdalena, again saying, she would breakfast at the general table, and declining any assistance from Victoria's maid, her new friend left her; her simple toilette was soon completed, and re-joining Miss Devereux, they descended together to the breakfast-room. They found only Miss Arlington, Mrs. Fairfax, and Sir Eustace; Lady Piercefield having been, in common with all the family, disturbed by Henrietta's early party, chose to have breakfast in her own room, and the young men all gone on the fishing-scheme. Miss Arlington engaged in making breakfast, and Mrs. Fairfax, in doing honour to the various delicacies with which the table was covered, were too much occupied to give any interruption to the calm and sensible conversation into which Sir Eustace and his two young friends im-

perceptibly fell, as they lingered over a breakfast, which seemed to be but a secondary consideration with them all. The attentive care of the head gardener had filled the recessed windows of the cool and shady room, appropriated to the first meal, with some beautiful hot-house plants, which Magdalena, who was excessively fond of flowers, admired extremely, though a recollective sigh arose, as she perceived, that some of them were of the same kinds, and dispensed the same fragrance, as those she had received from Isabella, by the hands of Reginald, on that memorable morning, in which he had first declared to her his tender attachment. It has been often remarked; that particular airs, which have been heard under interesting circumstances, are ever after associated in the memory with those events, and it is certain that grief or tender remembrances, which time has subdued, or almost effaced, are often suddenly awakened with irresistible

power, by a strain of music which we heard when they first existed. Such is also the effect of particular perfumes; the scent of flowers, which a beloved object wore, or was pleased with, will always revive its influence in the memory.

Magdalena was falling into a pensive reverie, when her attention was recalled by the animation and delight, with which Victoria was descanting on the vegetable beauties of the Cape. She spoke of the elegant variety of blossoms, with which, at the end of the rainy season, the plains at the foot of the table mountain are covered, and which she had witnessed when on her voyage to India; the ship, in which she was, remained there for many days. She described with elegance and precision the endless varieties of the beautiful Oxalis, displaying every possible tint of colouring, brilliant red, purple, violet, and snowy white. The Hypoxis Stellata, a lovely star-flower, some

bright yellow, others clear white, and others containing in each flower, white, violet, and deep green. "But oh," she exclaimed, with all her natural warmth, "what words can give an idea of the delicious fragrance, with which the evening air is filled, from the small white blossoms of the Cinnamon flower*, or the exquisite beauty and variety of the Ixias Gladioluses, and different species of Lily!—To say nothing of having the sides of the hills clothed with every kind of Geranium. Indeed, Sir Eustace," she added, "I would gladly brave all the dangers of a journey into the interior of Africa, could I be sure of seeing, though only once, that beautiful, that magnificent flower, of which Vaillant gives such a glowing description; if it be only the production of his own vivid imagination, one must acknowledge fancy never produced any thing before half

* Ixia Cinnamomea.

so charming; and I am an enthusiast in flowers*."

* Vaillant thus describes the flower, to which Victoria alludes. "While occupied with birds, their melodious warblings, their splendid and variegated plumage, I advanced through a grove of Mimosa's, when my organs of smell were suddenly struck with the most exquisite perfume. I sought, therefore, for the plant or shrub which afforded me so delicious a pleasure; the surrounding air served me as a guide; and the nearer I approached to the flower, the more I was intoxicated with the smell. I had reached the banks of the river, when my admiration was excited by the sight of a magnificent plant, the most beautiful I had ever contemplated; but I was obliged to raise my head, in order to admire it. It was a Lily, seven feet in height, which, waving majestically on its flexible stem, breathed forth its delicious odour. On the upper part of its strait tapering stem were displayed, in elegant order, thirty nine Corallas or flowers, six of which were half blown, eighteen in full bloom, and fifteen ready to open. Those which had attained their complete size formed a calyx, a third larger than that of the white lilies of Europe; their petals of a beautiful flaxen grey on the outside,

Sir Eustace smiled, and the conversation continued, on the brilliant colouring of the African birds, and the singularity of the animals. To give Magdalena a more accurate idea of them, he sent for those beautiful plates of the animals, and scenery of Africa, by Daniel, over which they were still sitting, forgetting the lapse of time or that breakfast had long been concluded, when they were startled by the bursting open of the door, and the entrance

and white as snow, within were edged with a crimson border, and were set off by a pistil and and stamina, which in colour equalled the brightest carmine. The stem, seven feet in height, was, where thickest, six inches in circumference, reddened on the side towards the sun, which had given it a vinous tint; it was green every where else, and bore leaves three feet in length, and in breadth, three feet and a half. In a word, this plant produced in a solitude, and pure as the sun which had embellished it, had been respected by all the animals of the district, and seemed defended even by it's beauty.—*Vaillant's Travels in the interior of Africa.*

of Henrietta, followed by the young men, draggled, dirty, fatigued, and as she declared, half famished, an assertion, in which she was joined, by all her beaux.—Another breakfast was instantly prepared; baskets of fish were produced; loud laughs at the untoward accidents, which had occurred to some of the party, and the awkwardness of others, of whom Henrietta declared, she believed they had never seen a fish taken out of the water since they were born before, filled the room. Miss Arlington annoyed, beyond her powers of endurance, rang the bell, and ordering her maid to carry the materials for her different amusements, into her own apartment, left the noisy set in possession of the breakfast room.

Sir Eustace, with his two young friends, and Lady Piercefield, who now joined them, were also driven by the tumultuous party to the library, where they remained till dressing time, referring to different Authors, who

have written on India and the Cape, and enlivening their researches, by examining various maps and prints of the different countries, upon which the conversation turned.

They all dressed early, and much more moderately, than the day before; and, soon after dinner, with a small band of music, which Sir Eustace's household furnished, and carrying wine, fruits, &c. they embarked on board the beautiful pleasure-boat; and, for the first time in her life, Magdalena found herself gliding gently on the surface of that beautiful river she had, from her infancy, been accustomed to admire. The reach of the river, which skirted the park of West-hay, spread itself into a smooth expanse, on which they floated, while every feeling in the bosoms of those who could feel, was hushed by the deep repose of the surrounding scenery. The bank on one side rose many feet, almost perpendicular, wooded to the top, and broken here and

there by abrupt grotesque crags; before them the distance presented grand masses of rocks, or ancient woods, and the other side of the river beautiful meadows, and fine corn fields, with every desirable feature of a lively country, were presented to their view. Charmed and delighted they all proceeded, enlivened at intervals by the soft strains of music, or cheerful conversation; and soon after passed several gentlemen's seats, and caught a fine glimpse of Delamere castle, frowning in stern magnificence, with its castellated turrets, and ancient oaks. In less than an hour, they came in sight of a light and elegant mansion, which, on enquiry, Magdalena learnt, was Milbank park; the river wound almost close under its paling, and at only the distance of about an hundred yards from the house, which stood on a gentle eminence, sloping down towards the water. Two or three ladies, who appeared to have been wandering under

the shade of some large trees on the bank, approached, as closely as possible, to the edge, attracted by the gay appearance of the boat, and the sound of the music; as the vessel glided swiftly by, Magdalena fancied, that, among them, she could distinguish her loved, her lamented Isabella, and, eager to ascertain this point, without considering where she was, she rose suddenly, and had nearly been precipitated into the water. Sir Eustace scarcely saved her, by catching her in his arms, whence, alarmed as it seemed, by the danger she had incurred, he half reluc- luctantly released her, exclaiming—"Dearest Magdalena, why, oh, why would you run such a risk?" The tender epithet, the softened accent, spoke the deep interest with which he regarded her; and her heart shrunk from the belief now forced upon her, that he felt for her a sentiment more powerful than friendship: what effect his manner had upon the minds of others she could not

judge, but when recovering a little from her emotion, she looked round, she saw Victoria pale, trembling, and with tears in her eyes; appearances which she attributed, with great probability, to the sudden alarm Miss Melrose had excited. Miss Arlington looked disdainful, Lady Piercefield grave, and somewhat frightened, and Henrietta amused herself by betting with the young men, that had Miss Melrose fallen overboard, not one of them would have attempted to save her. Magdalena looked, but looked in vain; Milbank was no longer in sight, and Isabella, if Isabella it really had been, was left behind! She sighed, tears of regret and anguish obscured her sight, the lovely scenes no longer attracted her observation. Reginald and Isabella alone, of all the world presented, seemed interesting to her; and she wished for some calm retreat, even for the gloomy solitude of Delamere, where she might alone and unheeded think of

them, and them only. Sir Eustace seemed to watch her countenance, but attributing its melancholy cast to the terror she had undergone, he gently soothed her, and endeavoured to call off her thoughts to the beautifully changing scenery every instant presented to their view. But to be delighted is not within the compass of choice, and a pleasing train of ideas once painfully interrupted, is not at will to be regained. Victoria, silent and abstracted, no longer animated the party by her lively sallies or brilliant smiles; and Henrietta, amused by quizzing the young men around her, contributed but little to the general entertainment. They were all glad when they landed at * * * * hall, in the fine woods belonging to which they meant to ramble for two or three hours, and then return by moonlight to West-hay.

As they returned beneath a cloudless sky, and one of the brightest moons that ever favoured a rambling expedition,

the ladies, Lord Charles, and Captain Burton, sung some beautiful glees; Magdalena, unused to that style of singing, could not join them, but she listened with delight to the sweet harmony of their well according voices; Victoria and Henrietta kindly undertook to teach her some parts in different glees, and still more kindly insisted on her being excused from singing alone, as they observed she was was not in spirits.

As they repassed Milbank park, she again strained her eyes in looking towards it, several windows in that front of the house next the river were lighted, but no white robe, seen indistinctly through the trees, flattered the heart of Magdalena, with the hope that she was in the immediate vicinity of Isabella.

"I wonder," said Lady Piercefield, "that Lord and Lady Milbank have not called upon us; they must know we are in the country; and, as very old

acquaintances, I thought they would have visited West-hay before now."

"Oh, we shall have an inundation of visitors in a day or two, I suppose," said Miss Arlington.

Sir Jerome and Lady Macartney, and some others, were named as expected; a short conversation on the merits of some, and the remembered oddities of others, in the neighbourhood, soon brought them to West-hay; and after a slight refreshment, all weary and some dejected, they were glad to retire to their separate apartments.

CHAP. VII.

"I'LL tell you what," said Henrietta, next morning, as soon as breakfast, which, by some odd chance, they had all taken together, was over, "I'll tell you what, good people, you may all do

as you like this morning, by way of amusement, but I must go hard to work; for, if I do not make myself a pair of shoes in a day or two, I must go barefoot, or ride to Carlisle to get some."
"Make a pair of shoes!" exclaimed Magdalena, in unfeigned astonishment; for such an appropriation of any part of a lady's time had never entered her imagination. "Yes, to be sure," replied Henrietta; "I always make my own shoes, and I brought with me only two pair fit to walk in; and, what with the fishing yesterday morning, and the walking in the woods last night, they are both torn all to pieces; for, I don't know why, they certainly do not wear quite so long as those I used to get from the shoemaker." "But, Henrietta," said Lady Piercefield, "you can send one of the men to Carlisle, and he can bring you some shoes." "No, thank ye, ma'am, I had rather make them, or if I cannot find time to do that,

I shall ride there myself; I like to be independent."

She now rung, and ordered her shoemaking apparatus to be brought to her; and Magdalena's surprise redoubled to see her produce the real implements of the trade, and sit down in serious earnest, to make a good strong pair of leather shoes.

"Of all the absurd fashions that ever were invented," said Victoria; "I think, that of a lady's turning shoemaker has the least to recommend it."

"Oh," said Henrietta, as she hammered her leather; "you and Matilda are afraid of spoiling your fine hands and taper fingers. You know I like odd things."

"Or you would not like yourself," said Sir Eustace, smiling; "but I must agree with Victoria; and, I confess, I would rather see a lady fastidiously careful of a fine hand, than spoiling it by such very unprofitable, as well as, ungraceful employment: and when I

know how well Henrietta can fill up her time; how justly she can appreciate the taste of the poet, and the truth of the historian, I own I cannot bear to see her placing herself on a level with a common cobler."

"Oh, as to reading, and all that," said Henrietta; "I *used* to be fond of it, but I am tired of it now; it is quite out of fashion!" "What, since the day before yesterday!" said Victoria, laughing.

"Oh, the day before yesterday; after going into the stables, and round the grounds, I was tired, and found myself, I hardly know how, in the library; I sat down to rest on a snug comfortable little ottoman, and the books being in the way, I took them up, by way of a lounge; but I assure you, people quiz one so, you have no idea, if one knows any thing on literary subjects; so, for the time to come, I mean to forswear all acquaintance with authors, living or dead; whether bound in vellum, or

walking about drest in silk or broad-cloth: books are very well for children learning their lessons; but, for the future, I mean to divide my time between shoemaking, fishing, billiards, and riding on horseback."

"Henrietta afraid of being quizzed!" said Miss Arlington.

"I am, indeed, surprised," said Sir Eustace; "I thought her above regarding that last refuge of the half-witted, and the vulgar! who hope to conceal their own deficiencies, by a poor attempt at ridiculing minds and manners, far above the range of their limited conceptions!"

Miss Arlington looked confused; for she was notorious for the *fashionable accomplishment* of *quizzing*, as far as her small share of wit permitted. "Are we, then," she said, "to be totally precluded from the exercise of wit or raillery?"

"By no means," said Sir Eustace;

"no one delights more than I do in that playfulness of the imagination, which enlivens discourse by new ideas, or in that brilliant wit, which, with a single word, punishes presumption, or detects conceited ignorance. But with these *quizzing*, properly so called, has nothing to do. The most silly is more capable of employing it than the wisest; and trifling boys and girls frequently hold up the most exalted characters, and the most important subjects, to ridicule, by employing coarse images and exaggerated phrases, to distort the truth and reality of virtue and wisdom, into the semblance of absurdity. How have I been annoyed since my return to England, by poor little insects, whom I have seen buzzing about, and tormenting beings, who wanted but the will to crush them in an instant!"

"Uncle," said Henrietta, charmed by his energetic words and manner, out of her pretended resolve to be igno-

rant, "did they not remind you of Spencer's simile:—

* "As gentle shepherd in sweet even tide,
"When ruddy Phebus gins to welke in west;
"High on a hill his flock to vewen wide,
"Marks which do byte their hasty supper best;
"A cloud of cumbrous gnattes doe him molest,
"All striving to infix their feeble stings;
"That from their noyance he no where can rest,
"But with his '*sweeping*' hands their tender wings,
"He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their murmurings!"

They smiled at each other, but would not recall her new determination to her mind, by noticing her deviation from it. "The parallel," said Sir Eustace, "is just in all its parts. But above all modes of quizzing, let me deprecate that which affects to praise and admire, while a sly glance at an associate declares, that the object of it, who listens with blushes and pain, is, in reality,

* Spencer's Faerie Queen.

displayed at that moment as something ridiculous and outrè. There is, in this species of duplicity, a mixture of artifice and cruelty, which can never be enough detested: it is calculated to strike at the root of all confidence, and shews a bad heart, and a base wish, to employ the honest credulity of others to their own injury; and those are most liable to be thus imposed upon, whose own hearts are the purest, and whose understandings, however excellent, are too free from that obliquity, commonly called cunning, to suspect it in others."

Victoria and Magdalena listened with delight to this pleasing conversation, though some parts of it touched a little the conscience of the former, and produced in her a resolution never again even to approach the boundaries of a practice which Sir Eustace deprecated so powerfully: and Henrietta, recovering the tone of oddity which she had dropped for a moment, again hammer-

ing her shoe, and with an arch smile, began to sing a popular air.

In the mean time, Miss Arlington had settled herself to her modelling; the beautiful bust was nearly completed, and did great credit to her taste and ingenuity. Lady Piercefield was seated at a tambour frame. Victoria was copying a botanical representation of some of the Cape flowers. Magdalena, at the open window, was sketching some striking parts of the surrounding scenery; Sir Eustace leaning over her chair, admired the precision and delicacy of her pencil, perhaps the fair hand which held it; the bright tresses which a gentle breeze sometimes blew aside, and the lovely cheek then displayed to his view, at least, divided his admiration. Victoria's eyes at intervals were withdrawn from her employment, and fixed for a minute or two on her guardian's face; an expression of anxiety almost of sadness crossed her lovely countenance; she sighed,

and again busied herself with her flowers.

Miss Arlington, when she could spare a moment from her work, seemed to be watching them all. Lord Charles and Captain Barton, finding it impossible to detach any of the ladies, retired to a game at billiards; at which Henrietta promised to join them as soon as possible: the young counsellor had departed that morning; and Miss Fairfax was studying a news-paper.

All remained quiet, interrupted only by occasional remarks, or the renewed hammering of Henrietta. Sir Eustace seemed stationary by Magdalena, addressing now and then a few words to her, in a low voice, which whatever was their import seemed rather to sadden than please her; though from the expression of his countenance Victoria concluded, they were words of praise, and wondered how Magdalena could be less than delighted with praise from Sir Eustace.

At least half an hour had passed thus, when the stopping of a carriage at the door, which, from the breakfast room was heard, but not seen, announced the arrival of company.

"Lord Ennersdale," I suppose, said Lady Piercefield; "he promised to call this morning."

"Dear old man," said Henrietta; "do you know, Miss Melrose, I admire this noble looking guardian of yours so much, that I think I shall marry him one of these days, if he will have me!"

"Have you!—To be sure!" said Miss Arlington; "it is quite the fashion for young women to fall in love with, and marry, men old enough to be their fathers!"

Magdalena involuntarily raised her eyes, believing the sarcasm was levelled at her; but the blush it raised on her cheek, was pale and colourless, to the burning crimson tint on those of Victoria; the countenance of Sir Eustace she could not see, but she ima-

gined it changed, for he leaned his head down, as if to examine her drawing more accurately. At that moment the door opened, and a servant announced Lord and Lady Milbank, and Lady Isabella Aubrey! Starting from her seat, with unconquerable emotion, Magdalena suddenly let fall her pencil, and striking her hands together, exclaimed, "Heavens!"—Then pale and trembling she sunk again into her chair; Sir Eustace and Victoria saw that she was agitated, but both probably attributed it to her timidity, and not being used to see strangers; for of any previous connection with the persons announced they could have had no idea.

Lady Piercefield and Sir Eustace advanced to receive their visitors, and, after the usual ceremonies, named them to the rest of the assembled party.

Magdalena breathless, her eyes veiled by an apparent mist, and a thousand

hollow sounds ringing in her ears, knew not for a minute where she was or what passed, but when a little able to recollect herself she looked towards Isabella, whom chance had seated opposite to her, hoping at least to receive a glance of kind recognition, if prudence forbade the open avowal of their tender friendship for each other. But, was it really Isabella she saw?—That very Isabella, who, the last time they parted, had clapsed her in a fond embrace, and hailed her by the tender name of sister!—No look of kindness, no word of remembrance greeted her!—Cold, erect, and stately, Magdalena almost fancied Miss Arlington had infected her beloved friend with some of her insensibility!

With eyes studiously averted from the place where Magdalena sat, Isabella now addressed herself with smiling courtesy, to the other ladies on their different employments, as if purposely to force the painful contrast on the

mind of Miss Melrose; that soft, that gentle voice, on which poor Magdalena had so often dwelt with delight, now its winning accents poured on the ear of all but her once so loved, once so courted!—To Lady Isabella Miss Arlington, content and willingly, displayed the work of which she had so rudely refused to Magdalena more than an accidental glimpse; they seemed entered into a conspiracy to torment her; but to all that Miss Arlington's scorn could offer, she was callous and indifferent. But, Isabella!—oh, it was too much! What had Magdalena done to incur a punishment so cruel? The utmost rigour of her hard fate had not prepared her for this; and her complexion varied so often that Victoria said, "My dear, Miss Melrose, you are not well, I am certain." "Not well!" said Sir Eustace, suddenly breaking off his conversation with Lord Milbank; "what, Miss Melrose, what is the matter?" and he rose ea-

gerly, as Victoria had before done, to assist her. "Nothing," said Magdalena; "nothing; pray, I entreat you, do not notice me; pray, Sir Eustace, pray, Victoria, say nothing on the subject." "I can do all that Miss Melrose wishes, Sir Eustace," said Victoria, with quickness;—"will not your anxiety,—your great—your concern—appear—" She hesitated, and did not finish the sentence; Sir Eustace coloured, bowed slightly, and returned to his seat. The latter part of this little conversation had been carried on in so low a tone, that none but those concerned in it heard what passed. "I am quite well now, my dear Victoria," said Magdalena, a sudden emotion of pride coming to her aid; "pray return to your seat." Victoria sighed, and obeyed. Lord Milbank, now recollecting Magdalena, addressed her politely, and enquired for Lord Ennersdale. She replied, that she had not seen him for a day or two; but

when he left her he was quite well. "You have seen Miss Melrose before, my Lord?" asked Sir Eustace. "I had that honour twice, by mere accident, Sir Eustace," he replied; "but did not know her name; till now, I believe *except* by accident, no one has ever had the pleasure of seeing the young Lady." Magdalena again blushed, again turned pale, again sought the still averted eyes of Isabella! Lord Milbank and Sir Eustace now held a few minutes conversation, in a low voice; during which their looks, directed at intervals towards Magdalena, convinced her that she was the subject of it. She knew, that both Reginald and Isabella had cautiously concealed their meetings with her, from the knowledge of the inhabitants of Milbank Park; nor had she reason to believe Lord Milbank was acquainted with Montaubrey's unsuccessful proposals to Lord Ennersdale: yet a thousand anxious thoughts crowded on her mind,

when she found herself the subject of his discourse with Sir Eustace!—Anxiety, fear, mortification, were all, however, absorbed in one over-ruling sentiment, when, in answer to some enquiry of Lady Piercefield, Lady Milbank said, "She left us a fortnight since to attend her son: Lord Montaubrey ran away from us a week before, in a very hasty manner; some whim, I suppose, to which young men are subject, though, indeed, he is less so than any one of his age I ever knew; my young friend here was so startled and annoyed at her brother's sudden departure, that she was quite indisposed for two or three days; and after that, to our extreme concern, Lady Montaubrey received a letter from the young Earl's valet, informing her, that his Lord lay dangerously ill at a little village, about fifty miles from hence: her ladyship set out immediately; she would not permit Lady Isabella to go with her, for she was really unfit to take such a journey;

we have since had the pleasure of hearing Montaubrey is better; and they are gone together to Montaubrey in Derbyshire; for he declines coming back to us, though Lord Milbank waits for his signature to some papers, to finish his concerns on Montaubrey's coming of age."

Oh! who can describe the sensations of Magdalena during this recital?—Little could those around her guess, how important to her feelings were the events detailed with so much coldness and insipidity, and heard by all others with so much indifference! A thousand conflicting pangs rent her heart! Was there then no one to share her anguish? Had Isabella quite forgotten those fond, caressing moments, when she had vowed through life, and under every circumstance, to retain the warmest sympathy in all the sorrows of the ill-starred Magdalena? An appealing look, of almost despairing grief, she once more ventured to cast,

upon her unkind, yet still loved friend. This time their eyes met; a bright blush coloured Isabella's cheek; her soft eyes were filled with tears; she seemed unable to withstand the supplicating, the sorrowing looks of Magdalena, who now, with the utmost difficulty, restrained herself from flying to her arms, and entreating for a return of love. Lady Milbank now requesting to see the new rooms, and particularly the library, as they intended making some alterations at Milbank, Lady Piercefield, Miss Arlington, and Sir Eustace, rose to attend her and Lord Milbank. Henrietta begged to be excused from moving, as she declared, she must go on with her shoes. "Isabella," said Lady Milbank, "will you come with us?" she passed on, and Isabella rose to follow. "Victoria, Magdalena," said Lady Piercefield, turning her head as she went out, "will you be of the party!" "Magdalena, I am sure, is not well," said

Miss Devereux, and approaching her, she kindly took her hand, adding, "I wish, my my dearest girl, you would let me go with you to your room." Overcome by the tenderness of her manner, and the contrast it formed to the cold constraint of Isabella's, Magdalena's tears now flowed abundantly, nor could her utmost efforts restrain them; she felt, indeed, as if their indulgence were necessary to her surviving the shocks she had sustained. Henrietta, busy with her work in one of the recessed windows, neither heard nor saw what passed, and all the rest of the party had left them. Isabella's steps seemed arrested; and she approached Magdalena at the sight of her distress, as indeed, unless totally devoid of feeling, she must have done a perfect stranger. Victoria seeing her tears, and hearing those heavy sighs, which seemed almost to rend Magdalena's heart, without waiting the slow aid of a servant, hastily ran to an ad-

joining room, where she knew she should find water and restoratives.—Magdalena, hardly sensible, involuntarily leaned her head on the shoulder of Isabella; who vainly strove to hide a tear, which would fall on the face of the innocent sufferer. "What have I done?" Magdalena faintly articulated; "oh, Isabella! What have I done to deserve this marked unkindness, this cutting estrangement?"

"To your own heart I refer you," said Isabella, in a low voice; "there look for the cause which has invaded my peace; and destroyed both the health and happiness of Montaubrey!"

"Have I, have I done this?" asked Magdalena.

"Yes! while I thought you sacrificed us to a sense of duty, however, in my opinion mistaken and overstrained; while I imagined you the victim of circumstances, which you, at least, supposed you could not over-rule, I loved, I pitied you! But now! I

see Sir Eustace will easily console you! The gay society of West-hay, the gilded boat, the sweet music, the soft attentions, and the *supporting arms* of Sir Eustace, are all-sufficient for the inconstant Magdalena!"

Victoria now re-appeared; and Isabella instantly followed the party, who had gone into the library; Henrietta, at her request, leading her to them.

"Too much, too much!" sobbed Magdalena; "oh, leave me, Victoria; leave a wretched girl; miserable herself, and involving all who approach her in misery!—Doomed, even unconscious infancy, to a fate, whose rigours pursue her through every stage of her unfortunate existence!——Oh, when shall that cold marble open!—When, my mother, shall I sleep the calm sleep of death with thee?"

Astonishment and horror deprived Victoria of the powers of speech; she thought some sudden frenzy had seized her suffering friend. "Magdalena!"

at length, she exclaimed; "Magdalena! What means this sudden burst of grief; this agony, apparently without a cause?———Recollect yourself! —It is Victoria speaks—Victoria, who cannot leave, who never will forsake you!" "Do you think I believe you?" asked Magdalena, with a bitter smile; "*I have believed those words before!*" A flood of tears, which followed these words, a little relieved the dreadful oppression of her heart; she became composed enough to entreat Victoria's forgiveness; and Victoria imagining that her strange words and manner had arisen from a degree of delirium, which often attends hysterical affections, only besought her to be calm; and at last succeeded in prevailing on her to leave the room, and go to her own chamber.

When she found her a little more composed, though she still wept, with almost insupportable dejection of spirit, Victoria said, "You have been

kept too much on the stretch, Magdalena; the life we lead here, where either mind or body is perpetually in requisition, is too much for you, who, by all I learn, have been accustomed to extreme quiet and retirement; take my advice, and, while you are here, let us breakfast together in our own apartment; we can then keep ourselves still, and free from all annoyance till a late hour, and you will be more able to enjoy the amusements of the evening." "You are very good," said Magdalena; "but I must go to Delamere; I hope Lord Ennersdale will take me back this evening. Oh, that I had never quitted it; for many years have I been wishing to mix in society, to taste the charms of companionship: And now!—oh, that alone and forgotten, the rest of my life might pass away!"

"Must I suppose," said Victoria, taking her cold hand; "must I suppose all this the effect of low spirits?

I would not be intrusive, neither can I permit you to think me indifferent; may I not, dear Magdalena—may I not ask the cause of this sudden anguish?"

"I must not—I dare not tell you; it has a cause, a sad, a cruel cause; but authority, I dare not contradict, forbids me to reveal any circumstance of my hard fate. I was, from the cradle, destined to a lot from which my soul recoils; yet, from which I dare not attempt to deliver myself. Thus much I may say, I have seen Lady Isabella Aubrey before; and when you left the room, she said a few words to me which hurt my feelings excessively. Do not ask me any more questions, my dear Victoria; I have no power to conceal my thoughts; yet, to declare them would involve me in misery."

"I will not ask you any thing," replied Victoria, much affected by her words and manner; "but let me say,

if any effort within the compass of my abilities could assist you——"

"No, no," replied Magdalena; "nothing can——if, *indeed*, you would love me——if you would promise to love me *always*, and not to condemn me unheard, even should appearances be against me! But do not promise! For I fear I cannot believe, even *you!*"

"Unkind Magdalena!" answered Victoria; "something has unhinged you—has oppressed your naturally tender and confiding heart! I *will* make no professions; time will convince you, that you may believe, and that I will not deceive you!" She then gently kissed her glowing cheek, and left her to the repose she so much needed.

Magdalena declined joining the party at dinner; but finding Lord Ennersdale, who dined there, expressed some uneasiness respecting her, she forced herself to appear in the drawing-room at tea-time; her pale cheeks and heavy eyes but too sufficiently proved the re-

ality of her indisposition; and Lord Ennersdale, having accidently heard who their morning visitors had been, easily imagined whence it had arisen.

Every tender, every delicate attention, Sir Eustace displayed, without obtruding; no one could help seeing, that Magdalena was to him an object of particular interest; and a nice observer might discern a distinction between his manner towards her, and even the affectionate kindness with which he always treated Victoria. To Miss Devereux the most attentive elder brother could not have been more kind; but to Magdalena, the softness of his accent, the expression of his countenance, conveyed a meaning more particular, and which she shuddered to perceive.—Complaining of continued indisposition, Magdalena begged to return to Delamere with Lord Ennersdale.

Lady Piercefield obligingly promised every attention; and recommended the quiet seclusion of her own room, with

Victoria for her nurse and companion, in preference to the complete retirement of Delamere; but Magdalena's sick heart longed to be entirely alone; and felt that nothing, but a day or two of solitary reflection, could restore her composure; it was, therefore, settled, that she should return with her guardian; and that, if she were better, Lady Piercefield should fetch her back to West-hay, the beginning of the following week.

CHAP. VIII.

DURING their short ride homewards, Lord Ennersdale asked no questions; and Magdalena was glad to be permitted to think in silence. From Mrs. Dennis she had to encounter a long lamentation on the dullness of the

castle, and her want of some one to speak to; she next adverted to Magdalena's pale and harassed countenance—supposed dissipation did not agree with her—was very glad she was come home; and, finally, left her at liberty to seek repose.

A day or two of quiet, in some measure, restored Magdalena to health, and to composure; she recalled every argument to her mind, which could induce her to suffer each evil of her fate without a murmur; she recollected all Lord Ennersdale's threats and promises: she prevailed on Agnes to let her revisit her mother's monument; and there, with sighs—with tears, but with unshaken resolution, she anew devoted herself a sacrifice to the fame and honour of its cold inhabitant. Almost at times she wished, that Hope and Fear were ended; that Sir Eustace would at once claim her; and that, as his wife, she might be obliged to stifle every recollection of Montaubrey;—every sigh for

the returning affection of Isabella! Yet, a degree of hope, almost imperceptible, even to herself, still hung about her heart; she could not be blind, though Sir Eustace seemed so, to the preference which Victoria gave him to every other human being; and which her warm ingenuous nature so ill enabled her to conceal. "And she is so lovely!" thought Magdalena; "so every way my superior! Can he resist her charms and her affection, and choose the cold, inanimate Magdalena; a breathing statue without a heart?"

Thus passed two days; and on the third, the whole party from West-hay, except Mrs. Fairfax, who was slightly indisposed, arrived, to dine with Lord Ennersdale; and Magdalena was to return with them in the evening; her intended visit having before been shortened, by her sudden indisposition. Lady Piercefield said, she must absolutely spend, at least, a week with them; during which they intended to

visit all the places of celebrity, in the immediate neighbourhood. The month of September was fixed on for seeing the lakes; an excursion of which also Magdalena was to partake; and some hints her ladyship had dropped, led her to suppose, she wished her to accompany them to London in November; too early, indeed, for a fashionable winter in town; but Lady Piercefield expected at that time to meet her only son in London; who had been for some months at Petersburg, and the few northern courts which, at that period, the widely-spreading power of France, rendered it safe for an Englishman to visit. Good-humouredly, Lady Piercefield recommended him to the notice of her young friends; and playfully asked Lord Ennersdale, "If he would spare Magdalena to be her daughter; unless, indeed," she added, "Piercefield should be won by the lively sallies of my dear Victoria."

"Those lively sallies," replied Miss

Arlington, "have of late been much repressed; Miss Devereux seems to have proclaimed a truce; and we all hail the *armistice*, as an omen of *peace!*"

"Did my *badinage* ever affect *yours*, Miss Arlington," asked Victoria, with a languid smile; "*I* was only at play; your severity alone ever marked our warfare as serious!"

To all the plans and suggestions of those around her Magdalena was indifferent; she felt that she could neither promote nor retard her destiny; and, referring all to that Power, which, she knew, only could support her under every event, she determined to yield, if possible, her wishes to her duty.

The castle was explored by the whole party: and the armoury seemed to afford Henrietta particular gratification; forgetting her late determination, to be ignorant of all that related to literature, she expatiated, with eloquence and precision, on the periods of English history, in which, such or such wea-

pons had been chiefly used; and the most interesting events connected with them: here Lord Ennersdale, Sir Eustace, and Magdalena, whom the cares of her guardian had deeply grounded in historical facts, were alone able to cope with her; they insensibly engaged in an interesting conversation.

Miss Arlington was sketching some of the helmets; Victoria, pensive, and almost dejected, was leaning at the window, apparently admiring the setting sun, and the long line of radiance which marked the outline of the distant hills; when they were disturbed by a low hollow, and indistinct sound; which rose, no one knew how, from a distant part of the long room in which they stood; on looking round, they saw Lord Charles, his head and neck buried in one of the enormous helmets, said to have been worn by an ancestor of the Delamere family, at the battle of Agincourt, stamping, making signs to have it removed, and appearing almost

in the agonies of suffocation. For an instant all stood suspended; but Sir Eustace, running forward, released his lordship by a strong effort; at the expence, indeed, of some of the fair skin of his delicate nose and forehead: Henrietta, laughing immoderately at the poor youth's pale and frightened looks, which were not much improved by the disorder of his hair and his scratched countenance, asked him, "If the helmet had no power to inspire him with courage?"

Victoria smiled, and enquired, how he came to think of decorating himself with an ornament so little appropriate. "Dear Miss Devereux," said he, recovering his breath, "I am sure I don't know; I thought I would just slip the frightful thing on my head; and while I was peeping through the holes in it, to see, in the polished steel shield yonder, how it became me, it fell first over my eyes, and then over my mouth, and almost suffocated me;—De-

vil take me, if it is not as heavy as a house; hang me, if I can think what those fellows heads were made of!"

"Of very different materials from yours, certainly, my lord," she answered; "*they* thought less of the outside than the in; and it was, in those days, indispensably necessary to the character of a gentleman, that the heart should be animated with courage, and the brains possess some portion of common sense!"

"I am sure one would not think so," he replied; "courage was certainly requisite; but they did not show much sense when they put on those intolerable helmets. I'll tell you what, Miss Devereux, I mean to go into the * * * hussars; they wear the prettiest helmets you ever saw, and so light and becoming! Lord bless you! why, you or Miss Melrose could wear them without having the head-ache; now, do you know, I'm very apt to have the head-ache."

"That's owing to intense study, my lord; you should not think so much."

"Well, no more I do; only when one's at college, the old fogrums make one read and study as hard as possible; its a perfect pest; so, when I come away, I never look in a book till term begins again!"

"An excellent mode of proceeding, my lord; and I dare say, if you get a *very* light helmet, and continue the same plan all the rest of your life, your brains may possibly remain uninjured, and you may continue as wise as you are now!"

"Is the armistice already broken?" asked Lady Piercefield, smiling; Victoria smiled also; but her smile was no longer that sudden illumination of the countenance, which, but a few days before, had struck Magdalena as so inchanting; her smile now was languid and transient; and those bright eyes, to which its playful expression used to impart new lustre, now veiled them-

selves in their long dark lashes; or, when raised, a tear, hardly dispersed, shewed that the heart which informed them was ill at ease.

"What is the matter with my dear Victoria?" said Magdalena, gently approaching her; "something, I am sure, oppresses your spirits?"

"Why should you think so? I was merely regretting, that my frivolous education, and volatile spirits, have not permitted me to render myself capable of partaking that interesting sort of conversation, in which you and Henrietta are so equal to engage; and which makes you so appropriate a companion for ——— every one, whose good opinion is worth having!"

"Accidental circumstances," returned Magdalena, "and the deep seclusion in which I have lived, may have given me opportunities of studying, under Lord Ennersdale's direction, some particular points of knowledge, perhaps not always considered in the edu-

cation of young persons; but——could you see yourself with my eyes, you would wonder, as I do, that any one else should ever receive attention where you are."

Sir Eustace now coming up with a book of prints, of antique ornaments, elucidating some points in the conversation, which Lord Charles's accident had interrupted, asked Magdalena some questions of opinion relating to them; unwilling to receive his attentions on her own account; and doubly pained by seeing how uneasily Victoria remarked them, though her ingenuous and affectionate nature prevented her from feeling envy of their object, she made some slight answer, and endeavoured to lead the conversation to more general subjects; but Victoria, as if determined not to obtrude herself, where she fancied her presence unwelcome, hastily turned away, and forced herself to chat with Lady Piercefield, so that Sir Eustace and Magdalena were left

standing at the window alone; then evidently shewing, that the book was a mere pretext for joining her, he closed it; and, gazing on her, with a look of tender admiration, he said, "You go back with Lady Piercefield to West-hay this evening, Miss Melrose?"

"I believe, sir," she replied, "it is so settled." "Not, I hope, without your approbation; West-hay, I trust, is not disagreeable to you?" he eagerly replied. "It is a sweet place," she answered, with some confusion.

"I am delighted you think so: Lady Piercefield is, I am certain, most happy to claim you as her guest. Matilda Arlington is not, I think, exactly calculated to please you; but Henrietta is, though odd, clever, and entertaining; and possesses, I believe, an excellent heart. And Victoria—what do you think of Victoria?" "That she is the loveliest, the most attractive creature I ever saw."

"She is, I think," he returned, "a very sweet girl; but not the *loveliest*, not the *most* attractive!"

"Your acquaintance, Sir Eustace," she answered, "is much more extensive than mine."

"True, but—we need not seek—it would not be necessary—" He seemed inclined to say more, but checked himself; looked at her with marked expression, sighed, and was silent. Magdalena, afraid that she knew but too well, how to construe these half sentences, and particularity of manner, sighed also. From a situation, which she now felt was growing uncomfortable, Magdalena was relieved by Lady Piercefield's saying, "If you all think, good people, that we have staid here long enough, Lord Ennersdale tells me, we shall find tea in the drawing room." Magdalena turned round, and saw that Miss Arlington's eyes were fixed on her and Sir Eustace, with an expression of scorn and displeasure; looking to-

wards Victoria, she perceived her also attentively gazing at them, over the shoulder of Henrietta, who was engaged with a book; her countenance was pale and sad; Lord Ennersdale's eyes were directed the same way, but with far different expression; he seemed delighted and unwilling to interrupt them; while Lady Piercefield evidently waited their motions, to determine whether or not she was to leave the room. Shocked at perceiving herself the object of general attention, Magdalena coloured highly; and, hastily passing Sir Eustace, took Victoria by the arm, and led her out of the room.

They now entered the drawing room; Lord Ennersdale, Lady Piercefield, and the two Miss Arlingtons, stopping in the anti-room to examine some fine pictures; Lord Charles and Captain Barton, who had, for some time, been keeping up a sort of mock skirmish, with two spears they had found in the armoury, chose to remain there a few

minutes longer; so that Sir Eustace, Victoria, and Magdalena, only entered this room, which the visitors had not yet seen together. The portraits instantly attracted Victoria'a observation; she immediately recognized that of Sir Eustace, though he was of course much altered since it was taken; and with a quick glance saw that a space was left for its companion. "How is it," she said to Magdalena, "that yonder pannel is empty?"

Magdalena blushed, turned pale, and trembled.

"Oh, I know!" said Victoria, hastily withdrawing her arm; "*your* picture is to hang *there!*" "No, believe me," answered Magdalena; "there has been a picture in that place! Do not, dear Victoria, ask any thing about it; the subject is too cruelly distressing for us all!"

"Pardon me, pardon me," said Victoria, again catching her hand, and pressing it tenderly.

A deep sigh from Sir Eustace, who, with folded arms, stood contemplating the vacant pannel, now called their attention; they looked, and saw him pale and trembling, with excessive agitation.

"I see, I see the meaning of all this," said Victoria; "we should not have been shewn into this room!" "It was ill judged," replied Magdalena; "but time and habit have rendered even that frightful space familiar to Lord Ennersdale; and he did not recollect the feelings it would excite in others! Oh, Victoria! that I *dared* reveal all the sad incidents connected with that dreadful vacancy!"

Sir Eustace attracted, by the low murmur of their voices, started from his musing; and, seeing the eyes of both sweet girls rivetted on him, shook off, by an effort, his emotion; and joining, placed an arm of each within his own. "Did you know *that* picture?"

said he to Victoria, pointing to the portrait of himself.

"Know it! Oh, yes! I should have known it any where!"

"Indeed! Do *you* see any resemblance?" he asked Magdalena.

"Certainly; a strong one."

"I see a resemblance," he whispered, "far, far more interesting! I could almost fancy the sweet original of a portrait, which ought to hang yonder, stood before me."

"The vacancy," said Magdalena, a tear falling on her cheek, "is grievous to my heart!"

"Does Magdalena know, at what price it may again be filled?" he asked in low tremulous accents; and clasping her hand in his, "Will she, can she, ever consent to restore *the portrait* to its place, on Lord Ennersdale's conditions; and, at the same time, give happiness, unequalled happiness, to the heart of Willoughby?"

This explicit question, this decisive declaration of his wishes, struck the soul of Magdalena with sudden terror; she turned pale, her limbs refused to support her trembling frame, and her head sunk, half fainting, on her bosom; Victoria, who had caught the low empassioned tone, in which he spoke, though not the words, was pale and trembling also, when Lady Piercefield, her two daughters, and Lord Ennersdale entered the room.

"For pity's sake, what is the matter with these two girls," asked Henrietta; "they are like ghosts, and seem trying which shall faint away first! Uncle, what have you been saying to them, to cause such alarming appearances?"

"Not a quarrel, I hope!" said Miss Arlington, with a sneering aspect: "Uncle, are you the Alexander of these two young ladies? Or, is it a scene in the Mourning Bride, Osmyn, Zara, and Almeria?

"To have contending queens, at dead of night,
Forsake their down, and stand with weeping eyes,
To watch like tapers o'er your hour of rest!"

Victoria's complexion changed to scarlet; but Magdalena, not understanding the malicious allusion, looked tranquil and unconscious.

"Ridiculous!" said Sir Eustace, angrily; "pray, Miss Arlington, do not include *me* in your attempts at wit."

"I am astonished at you, Matilda!" said Lady Piercefield. "Dear ma'am, why? Surely there is no harm in an innocent jest; or, has Miss Devereux an exclusive permission to laugh at, and quiz people?"

"Miss Devereux's jests are merely the result of playfulness," said Sir Eustace; "they are never accompanied by a cold sneer; nor have they the smallest leaven of maliciousness. A heart, which has no need of disguise, dwells on her lips; she praises because she loves, and laughs merely to excite innocent mirth;

but she would shrink from that species of sarcastic allusion, calculated only to wound the feeling, and distress the innocent!"

Victoria's eyes sparkled, joy, the most vivid, the most glowing, took possession of every feature; and rendered her complexion so bright, so radiant, that Sir Eustace, whose eyes rested kindly upon her, must surely have acknowledged, that she was, at least, *one* of the most lovely, the most attractive, creatures he had ever beheld. Miss Arlington now made some faint apology, and said, "She was sorry if she had offended."

"Offended! Offended me!" said Victoria eagerly, stretching out both hands to her; "Oh, no! Dear Miss Arlington, I owe you a thousand thanks!"

"*Thanks!*" repeated Sir Eustace, smiling.

"Yes," replied Victoria, turning her eyes full upon him; "one word of such praise would outweigh volumes

of far more bitter sarcasms!" And then ashamed; confounded at having said so much, she cast down her eyes, and, drawing Magdalena aside, said, in a low voice, "For Heaven's sake, take me away!"

Magdalena now sat down with her on a small sopha, and said, "I believe my ignorance saved me much mortification just now; for Miss Arlington looked as if she meant to say something severe; but I did not understand her allusion."

"No matter," said Victoria; "it was not worth attention; but sometimes——a single word——one's own mind points a satire, which otherwise would fall unheeded to the ground; would to heaven, I knew how to disguise my feelings better, I may say too truly—

"A cyprus, not a bosom, hides my poor heart!"

"Such a heart, who would wish to disguise?" asked Magdalena. "Ah,

Magdalena!" she replied; "the world, the world demands disguise! It is a power I must attain! A man may, in some cases, wish for a window in his bosom; a woman, never, never!"

The carriages arrived soon after; and Magdalena returned with the party to West-hay. Excursions for the next two days were immediately planned; they were to set out early in the morning of each, to dine where fancy led, and return in the evening.

Lord and Lady Milbank's, and some other calls, Magdalena found, had been returned during her absence; and the general sentiment seemed to be, that both Lady Milbank and Lady Isabella Aubrey were cold, proud, and unpleasant; of the former Magdalena thought the same; but Isabella's manners, she knew, were affected by the displeasure she had conceived against Sir Eustace, and all connected with him.

CHAP. IX.

THE proposed excursions were productive of considerable pleasure to the West-hay party; though there were moments when Sir Eustace's attentions to Magdalena, which, in fact, became every day more pointed, seemed to raise sentiments of displeasure in more than one of the number. It was natural to suppose Lady Piercefield would not be desirous of her brother's marrying; his early disappointment, and having remained so many years without attachment, had probably induced her to believe, he would always continue single; and that his large property would devolve on her children. Lady Piercefield, however, was not selfish or grasping; and, as her

family did not really need any thing from him, would doubtless have reconciled herself to his marriage with a woman, in her estimation, more suited for him; but the extreme youth of Magdalena, and her total ignorance of the world, led Lady Piercefield to see her brother's evidently increasing attachment with concern, as a probable source of unhappiness to himself.

Miss Arlington, cold-hearted, and loving only herself, was still more annoyed; and watched with unabated malignity, in hopes of meeting with some circumstance, which, by rendering Magdalena less amiable in the eyes of Sir Eustace, might destroy his apparent prepossession in her favour.

Henrietta, seemingly careless of every thing, but her own whimsical amusements, did not appear to trouble her head with any of their schemes or feelings; and was, perhaps, the only one of the party, who thoroughly en-

joyed these little excursions, in which they past three days; the fourth was to be a day of rest; and on the next Magdalena was again to return for some days to Delamere, while the West-hay family fulfilled some engagements to dinner parties, from all of which she had earnestly begged to be excused; and as Lord Ennersdale had some slight gouty indications, he also declined those invitations, in which he was included; and, not unwillingly, consented that Magdalena should be for some days again his companion: in fact, he the more willingly acceded to this plan, because the first of the dinner parties was given by Lord Milbank; and Magdalena did not more painfully shrink from a meeting, such as the last had been with Isabella, than Lord Ennersdale anxiously deprecated their meeting at all.

On the morning of the day before that in which she was to return to De-

lamere, Magdalena's troubled mind, and a heart oppressed by the painful conviction, with which Sir Eustace's attentions had lately impressed her, of his encreasing attachment, prevented her from sleeping; she rose, therefore, very early, and, desirous of a short ramble in the Park, she left her chamber. Victoria, she knew, was not an early riser; and she had no wish for any other companion amongst the inhabitants of West-hay; she descended the stairs with light steps, and was crossing the hall; when she started, on perceiving Henrietta already there; equipped in her usual style, when she intended to take a long walk; in her half boots, her negligent shawl, and large straw-bonnet; on her arm she carried a basket, which did not seem to be very light. "Good morning, Miss Melrose," she said; "going to walk?" "I was inclined to strole a little this fine morning," said Magdalena; "but am too much a stranger here to walk

far; you seem equipped for a greater distance." "Yes, if you will put on a more rational pair of shoes, and are not afraid of the dew, I shall be glad of your company; and, to tell you the truth, you are the only person here, except my uncle or Victoria, who have both acquired the lazy habits of the East, that I would take the trouble of asking to go with me." "You are very good, to make me an exception; I will change my shoes, and come directly." "Make haste, then, for I am in a hurry." Magdalena readily complied with this request, and having unbarred one of the breakfast room windows, they stepped out on the lawn; and, "brushed with hasty steps the dew away." Henrietta passed her arm through Magdalena's, and said, "It is so cool, we may walk a little faster than common; and by the time we reach the village, I shall be anxiously waited for." "Waited for?" said Magdalena, with some surprize; "do you, then,

expect to meet any one?" "Only some poor people that Nelson, (her maid), found out for me, yesterday; a poor woman was brought to bed last night of twins; she has not half cloaths enough to dress the poor little animals in, and I always keep a stock by me; Nelson works and makes things at her leisure hours, and I help her sometimes; in London she distributes them; in the country I like to have that pleasure myself, though I generally take her with me; but she went to bed last night with a bad head-ache, and I would not disturb her, so I shall carry the basket myself: Matilda is too fine and too fond of herself, to do any thing in this way; Victoria readily gives money, and I have now a donation from her, but she does not like to take any trouble."

A new world seemed opening to Magdalena; the strict seclusion in which Lord Ennersdale had kept her, had, as has been before remarked, en-

tirely deprived her of a possibility of exercising the best propensities of humanity; she knew there was a distinction of ranks; and that some were rich, some poor; she had even read of poverty and of hunger; but the words presented indistinct pictures to her imagination, and found no proto-type in her memory. She now learnt, that want really existed in the most painful forms; that the rich could, by a little exertion, ameliorate the condition of the poor; and her heart, naturally full of "the milk of human kindness," instantly taught her, that the power of doing so was an invaluable privilege, and an exquisite gratification.

"How good you are to take me with you!" she exclaimed "let me carry the basket. Luckily I have my purse in my pocket, and, for the first time in my life, I have some money; I could not imagine what use I should make of it when Lord Ennersdale gave it to me!"

Henrietta laughed heartily at her simplicity, and enquired if she really never had known the use of money before? "Never in my life," said Magdalena; "I knew that food and cloathing, and, in short, all necessaries and luxuries, were obtained by money; but till within this month I never went out of the park at Delamere, except in the carriage with Lord Ennersdale; and never spoke to any body——that is——not to any body who wanted money, of whom I wanted any thing that money could purchase."

"And did Lord Ennersdale deny you the pleasure of giving to the poor?"

"I did not even know, that any body in want was within my reach, and if I had I should not have dared to speak to them."

"But you might have sent them relief?"

"Oh, no! for I was not allowed to speak to the servants; and Mrs. Den-

nis never went out any more, nay, not so much as myself."

"Why, child!" said Henrietta; "you are like a person brought up in a desert island! Did Lord Ennersdale intend to make a nun of you?"

"Oh, no!" said Magdalena, with a sigh, looking very grave, and in a tone of such perfect naivetè, that Henrietta again laughing, requested to know, if she regretted very deeply that such had not been her destination?"

"I know I must appear very strange, and absurd to you," said Magdalena, blushing; "I am, every hour, more sensible of the deficiencies in my manners and conduct, naturally derived from the mode in which I have been brought up; I only wonder how any of you can endure me."

"Let me tell you, then," answered Henrietta, gravely, and with an air of kindness; "that either owing to your natural grace, or the care Lord Ennersdale, whose manners are excellent, has

taken of you, no deficiency of the kind, you mention, is in the least perceptible. If you are indebted for little acquired deportment from an intercourse with the world, you have also been preserved, by your seclusion, from any ungraceful habits or affected attitudes; you are like a fine original picture, which will please when a thousand tawdry copies are neglected."

"You are very, very good, thus to endeavour to give me confidence in myself; I shall never forget the obligation."

"Pray, remember it when you are my *aunt*," said Henrietta, half laughing; "I have some notion Lord Ennersdale has been training you for a destiny, which possibly you may prefer to that of being a nun. You need not blush about it; I ask you no questions, for it is a subject with which I have no concern; my uncle has every right to please himself, and he is too

good and too generous to do that at the expence of another's happiness."

"Indeed," said Magdalena, blushing still more, and with tears in her eyes; "I do not——the future——surely, Sir Eustace does not think"——She hesitated; and Henrietta said, "It is an odd subject to have fallen upon. I am apt to speak too freely; let us say no more, only this; if you want a friend, you will find me a safe and sincere one. Victoria—sweet Victoria, lovely, tender, and guile-less, may be prevented, by some delicacies, in her own situation, from serving you; you may probably never need the advice or assistance of any one; but if you should, remember, Henrietta Arlington says, what she never said to three people in her life before, she likes you, and will go any lengths to serve you."

They were now arrived at the village; and Magdalena, charmed with her conductress, who, she now found,

veiled a warm and excellent heart beneath an eccentric manner, followed Henrietta into the cottage of the poor ly-ing-in woman; delightedly she saw her administering comfort to the weak and dejected mother, and producing her stores of warm clothing for the little helpless infants. Magdalena was eagerly advancing, with her purse in her hand, prepared to empty it's whole contents on the bed of the poor woman; but Henrietta softly restraining her, said, "give, my dear; enjoy the delight of giving, but not *all*; we have more poor to visit." Then gently hinting what would be sufficient, Magdalena, with tears of pleasure, heard the first grateful blessing her charity had excited. "Oh!" she exclaimed, as they left the cottage; "that I could spend my whole life thus! surely, pain and sorrow would be unfelt, could we employ all our moments in doing good!"

Henrietta smiled at the animation of

her words and manner, and said, "may you ever retain these sentiments; your means will probably be ample; and though you will not, perhaps, always experience that glowing delight you now feel in the power to give; yet, if I read your heart aright, it will atone for almost any deficiency of happiness you may find or fancy in your future lot."

Magdalena, struck by these words, half believed that Henrietta really possessed the power of reading her heart; and had discovered the reluctance with which she looked forward to the completion of her destiny; as she dared not, however, confide, she did not continue the subject. They now visited three or four more poor families, to all of whom Magdalena gladly extended her bounty; and amongst whom some fine rosy children particularly attracted her attention; she had literally never been permitted to caress, or speak, to a child or infant before, and

it would be impossible to describe the tenderness and pleasure they excited in her heart; with difficulty Henrietta prevailed on her to leave them; promising to visit them again with her, the next morning.

They returned to West-hay with lightened purses, and hearts glowing with pleasurable sensations. Magdalena hastily made a slight alteration in her dress, not chusing to appear at breakfast with the vestiges, which the dew and dust had left on that she had worn to walk in; but Henrietta refusing to take that trouble, sat down just the same as she came in; and bore, with perfect *sang-froid*, all that was said to her, in jest and earnest, on her negligent attire.

Sir Eustace who knew that Magdalena had also been walking, adverted to the perfect neatness of her appearance, as an example, which Henrietta ought to have followed. "Miss Melrose is right," answered she; "she is so hand-

some, she need not do odd things; but, if I were to go on like other people, I should pass unnoticed; and that is a thing I have an aversion to!"—She then rose carelessly, and saying, she had not seen the horses these two days, asked Lord Charles to go to the stables, and departed, leaving Magdalena full of regret, that she would thus disguise a heart so affectionate and noble, under manners so strange and sometimes even repulsive!

Soon after breakfast Lord Ennersdale came in; and about an hour afterwards Sir Jerome and Lady Macartney were announced, who, in consequence of Sir Jerome's having been indisposed, had not before paid their compliments at West-hay, Sir Jerome, delighted once more to meet with Sir Eustace Willoughby, soon entered into an interesting conversation with him and Lord Ennersdale, and occasionally with Lady Piercefield; while Lady Macartney approached the table where Miss

Arlington was arranging with the utmost care, some curious botanical specimens; and Magdalena was tinting some sketches she had made in their late excursions. Her Ladyship thus began the sort of monologue, for which she was remarkable.

"Dear, how pretty; what an odd plant! Well, Miss Arlington, I am surprized at your patience; and do you always spread out the leaves so carefully?" touching, at the same time, some of the specimens in a manner so clumsy, as to alarm their owner, lest their delicate texture should be injured. "Well, I declare it is very ingenious! I have a cousin, who understands all those things amazingly well; she knows *mythology*,, and all about shells; what do you call it; not chronology, I know that is about birds; but this is about shells; I dare say you know Miss Arlington; dear, I can't somehow think of the name! Sir Jerome!—Sir Jerome!—what is it my

cousin is so fond of, about shells you know, I can't recollect the name."—"Conchology, my dear, I suppose you mean." "Aye, concholigy; beg pardon, my dear, for interrupting you: do you understand concholigy Miss Arlington?" "A little, ma'am."—"Well, the shells are very pretty, not that I understand them; I gave up so much of my time to music, and dancing, that I could not find leisure to study such things."—"Dear Miss Melrose, how well you look; I am quite glad to see you out; I hope now you will come to Hurst-ham with Lady Piercefield; you are on a visit here, I suppose?" "Till to-morrow, ma'am." "Oh, what do you go back to the old castle to-morrow?—Don't you find it very dull after West-hay, with such nice young ladies and beaux, and all so agreeable?"—Here her ladyship's volubility was interrupted by the entrance of two or three of the neighbouring gentlemen; and amongst them Mr. Mansfield, who

apologized for not having sooner paid his respects to Sir Eustace Willoughby and Lady Piercefield. He bowed to Lord Ennersdale; who, stately and stiff, hardly returned his salutation; Magdalena felt herself change colour; the recollection of their last meeting overwhelmed her with confusion, and she leant over her drawing, hoping to escape his observation; with the forwardness, however, which characterized him, he addressed her, and hoped he saw her quite well. "Dear Mr. Mansfield!" said Lady Macartney; "what do *you* know Miss Melrose; I thought you did not visit at Delamere!" "I had the honour of attending the young lady in a strained arm, Madam," he answered.

"Dear, how odd!" (nobody but her ladyship could guess in what the oddity consisted) "so, you strained your arm, my dear!—What did you fall down?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Dear! I dare say it was when you fell down stairs, that day that I was talking of when I was at Delamere last; that day you know that Lady Milbank and ——"

"Yes, yes, ma'am," interrupted Magdalena, impatiently; "that was the day!"

"Well, I declare now I recollect; somebody told me Lord Montaubrey rode himself to fetch Mr. Mansfield; for they thought you were actually killed, falling down those marble stairs. Pray, Lord Ennersdale, were you not shockingly frightened?"

Magdalena painfully blushing leaned her head over her work, and affected not to attend; and at that moment Henrietta entered the room, dragging in an immense cage full of Canary birds:—"Look," she exclaimed, not noticing the strangers; "look, Lady Piercefield; look, girls, what beautiful birds I have just bought of a man in the Park!—Uncle, I wish you would

have an aviary built; I will look out a proper place in the course of the day; I think nothing can be so pleasant as keeping birds." Here, seeing the visitors, she paused, was introduced to them, and slightly noticing each, resumed the subject of the aviary. Mansfield, eager to ingratiate himself, began to talk on the beauty of the birds, and the pleasure of familiarizing them; Henrietta, not attending to him, still addressed herself to Sir Eustace, who, smilingly promised to have an aviary prepared with all possible expedition.

"Who knows any thing about the management of these dear little creatures?" asked Henrietta. "Victoria, I know you will not take any trouble about them; Magdalena, can you help me out?"

"Oh, undoubtedly!" said Mansfield; "Miss Melrose is exactly the person to apply to; she has a beautiful little aviary at Delamere, I know."

"Delightful!" exclaimed Henrietta;

"why did you not say so, my dear? You and I will settle the place where mine shall be built."

Sir Eustace, attracted by hearing Magdalena associated in a scheme, to which he had before paid little attention, now came forward, with Henrietta, to ask questions, and hear what would be the best plan of the projected building; but Magdalena was too much disturbed, by Mansfield's allusion to *her aviary at Delamere*, to answer very distinctly. In the meantime Lord Ennersdale, surprized by hearing Mansfield assert his knowledge of any thing in the grounds belonging to the castle, fixed his stern regards upon him, exclaiming, "*You* know that Miss Melrose has an aviary, Mr. Mansfield? I should be glad to be informed, how *you* know it?"

"Oh, my Lord," said Mansfield; "I happened to lose my way one night, —one evening, I mean, and, not exactly knowing where I was, I crossed a little

green style from the copse; and found myself shortly afterwards before a very pretty aviary; I caught a glimpse of this young lady; but she knows I did not intrude on ——— on her *more pleasing occupations* a minute!"

Magdalena mortified, confused, and sick at heart, now almost wished the ground on which her eyes were fixed, would open and conceal her from the view of those around, whose gaze, she fancied, penetrated the secret of her soul.

"I know not, Sir," said Lord Ennersdale, in a tone of excessive displeasure; "what strange wandering, or mistake, could have carried you, even to the boundary of my grounds; still less into those walks set out entirely apart for Miss Melrose; and into which she alone was ever admitted!"—Oh, how Magdalena dreaded his answer; how she feared, that the next word he breathed would be Montaubrey's name! Either, however, awed

by Lord Ennersdale's looks, and unwilling to make him decidedly his enemy, or, perhaps, remembering his own explicit promises to Lord Montaubrey, and dreading the vengeance he might yet take, should he hear of his breaking them, Mansfield contented himself with the pain he had inflicted; and apologizing to Lord Ennersdale, said, the same mistake should never occur again. But Magdalena's heart still beat with fear and anger; to feel herself in the power of this man, and obliged to her moderation for the preservation of a secret, the disclosure of which would have involved her in so much unhappiness, and rendered her delicacy and prudence so very doubtful, was a dreadful punishment for her youthful errors; and had it been the only one they had entailed upon her, might have sufficed to determine her to avoid, for the future, every clandestine appearance. But, alas! With these remembrances, came also the idea of

Reginald and Isabella for ever lost! The latter too certainly estranged, the former either indignantly seeking to forget her, or lamenting her loss with grief, which destroyed both his happiness and his health! Her changing countenance betrayed, that her feelings were deeply interested; and she could not be ignorant that several of the party were watching her obvious discomposure.

Henrietta, now with apparent eagerness, caught her by the arm, saying, "Do, Magdalena, put away that tiresome drawing, and come with me; it is not very warm; I think I know a capital place for this aviany, not far off; let us look at it! Victoria, are you too lazy; if not, come with us! We shall meet Lord Charles and captain Barton somewhere on the lawn; and they shall give us their opinion. Excuse us, Lady Macartney—Matilda, shew Lady Macartney your paintings or wax figures, or——We shall not

be gone long."—Then, hastily shutting the door, after her, she added, "Don't want any of you with us—stay there, and amuse each other!"——And now, my little girls, take each one of my arms; and let me give you both a peice of advice: As to you Magdalena I could easily see the aviary story, and that impertinent coxcomb's manner of speaking about it, were not agreeable to you; perhaps, there was some little secret connected with it; most girls love little secrets; and strictly as Lord Ennersdale had secluded you, no wonder if you had yours; but, child, you need not have looked, as if the man had found you committing murder in the aviary. I wish both of you, my pretty dears, would learn to bronze over your faces a little; and not let those changing complexions, and tell-tale eyes reveal all that is in your hearts; and sometimes give suspicion of a great deal more!"

"Most earnestly," said Victoria, "do *I* wish I could profit by your ad-

vice! I often think I should be glad, if my features and complexion were as immoveable and statue-like as Matilda's!"

"Or, that you possessed the nonchalance, not to say assurance, of her sister," said Henrietta, laughing. "I can tell you, you would go through life much more easily, though not, perhaps, with so much admiration, as your fine skins and speaking eyes will ensure you. I wonder at *you*, Victoria, because you have lived amongst other people; but as to my little *female Crusoe* here, *ma belle sauvage*, who has been brought up on a desert island, one cannot be surprized at her! However, if you really cannot conquer, these pretty blushings, and turnings pale, &c. &c. I'll tell you how to manage; whenever you suspect, by the beating of your silly little hearts, that the foolish fit is coming on, if I am by, call upon me; start up from your chairs, (over turn them if you will; the

more bustle to call off attention the better) exclaim, Henrietta! — "look "here! — or, look there! See the rooks "on the trees!—or, look at that cloud; "or, that sun-beam!—It will rain; it will be fine!" or any other nonsense that comes into your heads. I shall take the hint; and either carry you off, as I have done now or make some confusion or other, that shall fix every body's eyes upon me instead of you. I shall think nothing of tearing my gown, cutting my fingers, or making Mrs. Fairfax's poor little dog howl, by treading him, (not to hurt him though, for I should not like that); so now you know what you have to depend upon."

They both laughed, though pleased with her kindness, however singular in its manner; and she took care to keep them out till their troublesome visitors were departed; for which Matilda, whom Lady Macartney had completely wearied, did not fail very gravely to reproach her.

CHAP. X.

THE next morning Magdalena renewed her charitable rambles with Henrietta; and soon after breakfast returned to Delamere, where she was to remain for two or three days; but Henrietta, still interested in the aviary scheme, entreated she would return to West-hay for two or three hours on the following morning, to superintend the progress of the workmen, whom Sir Eustace had actually employed to build one; in the mean-time Magdalena was to design some of the ornamental parts, and bring her drawings with her. Sir Eustace most eagerly seconded these requests, and seemed delighted to engage her in the arrangement of any thing about his house and grounds.

Lord Ennersdale, who came to fetch

his ward, was always anxious to associate her with Sir Eustace, readily consented; and she had nothing to alledge against the plan, though she most earnestly wished not to be so perpetually connected with every scheme, whether of amusement or utility, in which the West-hay family engaged. In the present instance, however, she consented, not unwillingly, being desirous of obliging the kind-hearted Henrietta; and involuntarily anxious to hear some particulars of their visit to Milbank.

After spending some quiet hours in that deep reflection, which Delamere always inspired, Magdalena once more set out for West-hay; intending to return to the castle before dinner. Lord Ennersdale was not well; and the carriage conveyed her alone to Sir Eustace Willoughby's; it was yet early, and Magdalena knew that some of the family would probably be found in the breakfast-room, whither she went im-

mediately. Here, however, she found only Lady Piercefield and Miss Arlington, and was instantly struck by the change of manners in both; particularly in the former, who, kind and good-natured, had always received her before with cordiality and pleasure. She was now, however, so cold, so stately, and so distant, that Magdalena, shocked and amazed, knew not in what manner to conduct herself, and turned even to Matilda, for some relief from the apparent estrangement of Lady Piercefield; but Miss Arlington, who had always been cold and haughty, was now even pointedly rude; and with marked disdain, turned away humming a tune, and left the room. Magdalena, unconscious of having offended, knew not how to account for these extraordinary appearances, in persons from whom she had parted on such good terms, but the day before! She stood suspended, whether to go or stay; and to Lady Piercefield's slight invitation

to be seated, she returned no answer, but walked to a window to conceal her excessive embarrassment. On the lawn, to her great relief, she perceived Henrietta walking up and down, in earnest conversation with Sir Eustace; both immediately saw her, and kissed their hands, making a signal, that they were coming in immediately; but the conversation seemed too interesting to be instantly interrupted; Henrietta was speaking with warmth, and earnestness of action; Sir Enstace replied, in a manner apparently decisive, and full of energy. A minute passed, then Henrietta suddenly bent, kissed her uncle's hand and leaving him, as it seemed, in deep thoughts, flew towards the window where Magdalena stood. To her, Lady Piercefield, during this scene, (which, from the place where she sat, was not visible), had not spoken; but seemed to be wholly engaged with a pamphlet she held in her hand. Henrietta now approached the

open window; and, as she stept lightly in, extended both hands to Magdalena, with unusual warmth of demeanour; for, in general, her manner did not fully express the affection of her heart, kissed her cheek, and said, she was delighted to see her. Cheared by this kindness, Magdalena gladly returned her caresses; but Lady Piercefield, who, now, first perceived her daughter, exclaimed, "Henrietta, I am surprized at you! Is it not an extraordinary thing, you never will do as I desire you!" "What, ma'am?—I did not know, you wished me to do any thing in particular!"

"Your memory is very short, when you chuse!—Did I not request you to direct Nelson about, your dresses; if Sir Eustace gives this ball he talks of, they will be wanted."

"No hurry, ma'am; I shall certainly not leave Miss Melrose to settle about them now."

"Pray, do not let *me* detain you,"

said Magdalena, while tears of mortification stood in her eyes; "I am going home directly!"

"Indeed, my dear, you are not," replied Henrietta; "I hope you have brought me the designs you promised me?"

"Yes——but——another time——"

"Why another time? What time can be better than the present? I am quite impatient to see them——No, don't unroll them here——we will go to my dressing-room; I don't believe you ever saw that neat apartment; it is very happily arranged, I assure you!—Victoria has a bad head-ache this morning," said Henrietta, as they ascended the stairs; "she is not out of bed."

"Is there not something unpropitious in the air to-day?" asked Magdalena, with a half smile; "you alone seem to have escaped its influence." "As to me," said Henrietta, laughing; "though with respect to my pursuits and amuse-

ments, I acknowledge myself to be, in some respects, a female *Zimri*;* my friendships and affections, neither depend on the state of the atmosphere, nor, what is quite as little to be depended on, the idle chatter of frivolous women; who talk of matters they do not know any thing about; or if they do, have no concern with."

As she spoke, they entered her dressing room; where her maid was employed at her needle: the apartment

* Dryden thus characterises the Duke of Buckingham, under the *name of Zimri; in his Absalom and Achitophel.*

" In the first rank of these did Zimri stand;
A man so various, that he seemed to be,
Not one, but all mankind's epitome!
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
Was every thing by starts, and nothing long;
But in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chymist, statesman, fiddler, and buffoon!
Besides ten thousand freaks that die in thinking!
Blest madman! Who could every hour employ,
In something new, to wish or to enjoy!"

was as Henrietta had hinted, rather in a state of confusion; in one place stood a large work-basket, full of linen for the poor; in another lay maps, and books half open; here a table covered with drawing materials; there another, with shoemaking apparatus; a large electrical machine; and other heterogenous articles met the eye.

"This is my own, dear little snug asylum," said Henrietta; "no one is ever admitted here, but those I love best; Matilda would not set her foot into it for the world; this delightful confusion annoys her beyond endurance! You need not be frightened, Nelson——no——I will not have a bit of the *litter*, as you call it, removed. Miss Melrose knows, it is my whim to have things in this state; so you need only take away yourself and your work basket, and leave us to ourselves. "Now, my dear," said she, sitting down, as Nelson retreated; "sit

down here by me; there——push away those books; and now show me your designs."

"Stop one minute," said Magdalena; "tell me first, what has happened; I am certain, by the manner of Lady Piercefield and your sister, something respecting me has given them offence."

"I wish," replied Henrietta, "you would not ask me any thing about it; its all nonsense! I can keep things to myself pretty well, if I am not interrogated; and if I am, by those I despise, I don't mind telling a white fib or two; but, if *you* ask me, I shall be obliged to tell the truth; and I had rather not——"

"But," said Magdalēna; "this business seems to be of so much importance to me; that though I would not wish to distress you, I am really too anxious to know the cause of the extraordinary change in Lady Piercefield, to

whose kindness I have hitherto been so much obliged, to remain silent any longer."

"Well; I see you will not be easy, unless I tell you; and, perhaps, after all it is right you should know:—the truth is, then, that all this silly mischief originates with that haughty, stupid, Lady Milbank." Magdalena trembled; she knew not to how much of her connection with Montaubrey and his sister Lady Milbank was privy, nor in what manner she had chosen to represent it; she was, however, unable to speak; and Henrietta continued. "You need not look so alarmed, Magdalena; for, if all her ladyship hinted be true, you could not help it; nor do I see what any body has to do with it; though mamma feels all the pure Willoughby blood in a ferment on the subject; and Matilda, adding the pride of the Piercefield's to that, is delighted with the hope of looking down on one,

who, if the accident of birth be, as she fancies, in her disfavour, is in every thing else so very much Miss Arlington's superior! My uncle, however, will soon set all this to rights; though I find, even he cannot wholly explain this untoward business."

"Pray, tell me all," said Magdalena, in a voice half stifled with emotion.

"Why, then," said Henrietta; "the important *all* is this: Lady Piercefield was speaking of you, in terms of high admiration, yesterday, at Milbank park, in which Victoria and myself warmly joined; Lady Isabella Aubrey was silent; and so, *of course*, was Matilda; who, you know, is not greatly disposed to praise any one;—Lady Milbank then said, Miss Melrose, *as she was called*, was certainly a *pretty looking* girl, and seemed modest and unassuming; but she *did* think Lord Ennersdale ought to explain a little, who she was; and what right she had

to be received in society, before he introduced her to such a family as Lady Piercefield's! For her part, she was very particular; and thought the world, in general, much too lenient in its reception of young people; girls especially, who were so circumstanced by their birth, as to have no right to any name or place in society! We all stared; and she then went on to tell us, that Lord Ennersdale had once a daughter; of this daughter's fate she detailed some reported particulars, so affecting, even clothed in her cold insipid language, as melted Lady Isabella and Victoria into tears; and gave me, who seldom cry, a dreadful pain in my throat.

"It seems that you, my dear, are supposed to be the child of this beautiful Miss Delamere; for it is said, she was never known by *any other name;* and Lady Milbank inferred, certainly with some appearance of reason, that

had she actually been married, even to an inferior person, Lord Ennersdale would have taken pains to ascertain the fact, instead of endeavouring to stifle the story altogether, and introducing you, as a *distant* relation, and under, what is thought to be, a feigned name. I know I am giving you a great deal of pain. I wish you would have suffered me to remain silent! Lady Milbank went on to say, that Lord Montaubrey, by an accident, which she related, had seen you; and afterwards, having saved Lord Ennersdale from being drowned, in a sudden rising of the water, between Sir Jerome Macartney's and Delamere, he had three or four times visited at the castle; and, for a wonder, had been permitted to see you, or had seen you by chance; that he was so much pleased with you, and seemed to think so much about you, that his mother became quite alarmed; and even feared he would have pro-

posed for you; but that *she never would have consented to the match, or received you as her daughter*, unless Lord Ennersdale could satisfactorily have explained all the mysteries of your birth. However, fortunately she said, the young earl, if he ever had such an intention, had changed his mind; and taken himself suddenly away from Milbank; that he had since been very ill; and a great many other things she ran on with, of no consequence. All this time Lady Isabella cried excessively; and at last jumped up, and ran out of the room. Lady Milbank explained this, by saying, she, too, had been greatly taken with you; and it was with great difficulty she had convinced her, how improper such a connection would have been for Lord Montaubrey. All this passed before the gentlemen joined us after dinner; when they came the subject was dropped. But after our return, my mother expatiated upon

it very freely, and said, She must absolutely insist on our withdrawing from the very particular intimacy we had formed with you: Matilda promised readily and gladly to obey; Victoria cried till she was quite ill; and I boldly declared, I would not do any thing so unjust; we had a little skirmishing about it, and I walked off to bed. This morning I have been telling my uncle the whole story; I never saw any one so angry and vexed as he was; his whole mind seemed shaken with agitation; yet, I found that he knew every particular of the affair, in which he was deeply interested; and he said enough to satisfy me, that he will soon settle the matter very quietly with my mother; so, my dear girl, you need not be so distrest; I ask you no questions; if you can tell me any thing that will enable me to be of service to you, I will gladly hear you; but I have no idle curiosity to gratify."

"You are too good," at length, re-

plied the weeping Magdalena; "I am undoubtedly the child of the unfortunate Horatia Delamere; I have every reason to believe my mother was married; but how to prove this I am totally ignorant. On certain conditions Lord Ennersdale has given me to understand, that he can, and will, establish my legitimacy; strange as it may appear, that he, who is the natural guardian of his daughter's honour should hesitate an instant to establish it, if in his power, such actually seems to be the case; nor will he be prevailed on to disclose his knowledge of this important affair, but at his own time and manner! On the contrary——but—I dare not! I must not reveal those direful denunciations! Frenzy!—the remains of a dreadful malady, caused by grief, can alone account for his conduct! Spare me! Dear, kind, Henrietta, spare me! The subject is too much for me!"

She crossed her arms upon the table

before her, and leaning her head upon them, gave way to the tears and sobs, which almost rent her heart. Henrietta bent over her, and soothed her with the kindest words, and assurances of the tenderest friendship, and most resolute support.

"My uncle," she added, "has declared to me enough of his feelings towards you, to convince me, he will not suffer you to be treated with the slightest disrepect; my mother loves him too well to disoblige him. Sir Eustace is certainly some years older than you are, my dear Magdalena; but his person is still pleasing; his mind, manners, and character, unexceptionable, indeed superior to those of most men; if you have no prepossession, or *one which cannot be indulged*, consent, wisely and rationally consent at once to the proposals, I know, he will immediately make to you. I could have wished, indeed, Victoria had been his choice; but by what I could gather, his mind

seems to have been long leaning towards you; and your resemblance to your mother appears to have determined him. Whatever mystery may hang over your birth will, when you are his wife, be no more remembered; his wealth and consequence will silence all impertinent observations; and I am convinced, it will be your own fault if you are not happy; for, *I* have no belief in the necessity of romantic passion, to the felicity of the married state; and, indeed, if it be necessary," she added, smiling; "it seems to me, that Sir Eustace will have enough for you both. All I lament is, the disappointment of Victoria; who certainly is, but too tenderly prepossessed in my uncle's favour. I wish Love had not been, as usual, playing at cross-purposes here; for I have an idea——but no matter——what wisdom forbids to be indulged, a good mind will endeavour to conquer! Come, my dear Magdalena, compose your spirits; I shall manage this business

for you; you shall go back immediately to Delamere; nor will I have you come hither again, till Lady Piercefield has visited you in due form; and apologized by changing it, for the incivility of her manner this morning. As to Matilda, we will not trouble ourselves about her; *I* shall come and see you, let who will stay away; but I am certain, all this nonsense will soon be at an end."

She detained Magdalena till her spirits were more quiet; made her take some refreshment; and then accompanied her to the carriage. As they crossed the hall, Lady Piercefield, followed by Sir Eustace, came out of the breakfast parlour; her ladyship's eyes were red and swoln; and her countenance discomposed; when she saw Magdalena she stopped, and seemed inclined to retreat, but, recollecting herself, advanced, and said, in a faint voice, but with some appearance of

kindness, "Going, Miss Melrose? Are you not in a great hurry to-day?"

"I promised Lord Ennersdale, who is not very well, to return soon," re-replied Magdalena; they then mutually said, "Good morning," and passed on.

"I told you so," said Henrietta; "I knew how it would be."

Sir Eustace now joined them; and taking a hand of each said, "My dear Henrietta, cannot you prevail on your fair friend to remain with us a little longer?"

"Not now, sir," said Henrietta; "but I hope we shall soon have her amongst us again."

"Oh, soon, and for ever be it!" whispered Sir Eustace, to Magdalena; and then pressing her hand to his lips, he put her into the carriage, which immediately drove off.

Left to herself, her memory retraced all the circumstances Henrietta had

related to her; she now glowed with indignation; now melted with sorrow and regret. On the description of Isabella's grief she dwelt with soothing complacency; and to the kind, the sensible Henrietta, her heart turned with grateful affection. She saw, plainly she saw, that the sacrifice her fate demanded must be accomplished; she saw, there was no other means of removing the odious imputations Slander had fastened on her mother's fame; and that, with respect to Montaubrey, all was decisively at an end; his mother's opinions respecting her now clearly ascertained, would have prevented her from becoming his wife, had there been no other obstacle between them; and to hope that Lord Enhersdale would relinquish his purpose, and establish her legitimacy, except as the affianced bride of Sir Eustace, she knew to be in vain. Once again, then, and more determinately than ever, she resolved to accept Sir

Eustace's proposals; and henceforth resolutely to stifle all idea of Montaubrey, and, if possible, for ever to forget him.

To Lord Ennersdale she said nothing of what passed; she knew, that no representations could induce him to alter his plans, on which he seemed every day to be more firmly determined; and, therefore, she thought it useless to repeat the events of the morning.

CHAP. XI.

A SLIGHT attack of gout kept Lord Ennersdale in bed the next morning till late. Magdalena and Mrs. Dennis breakfasted together; and then the latter, anxious to dissipate her thoughts, went down to the study,

where her harp stood, intending to practise two or three hours; the amusements at West-hay having, of late, induced her somewhat to neglect it. She had not, however, played long before Sir Eustace Willoughby was announced. Magdalena, with some emotion, rose, and set aside her instrument.

After enquiries for Lord Ennersdale, and the customary compliments of the morning, &c. Sir Eustace remained silent; and Magdalena, impressed by uneasy consciousness, rose suddenly, and saying, she would herself inform Lord Ennersdale of his arrival, was hurrying out of the room. Gently detaining her, he requested her to sit down again; and permit him to use the present opportunity, to speak to her on a subject of the utmost importance to his happiness. Magdalena could not refuse; and summoning all her resolution, determined to hear him with tranquillity of demeanour; and, if pos-

sible, to answer with propriety and composure.

Sir Eustace, then, in the clearest and most explicit terms, offered himself to her acceptance; he declared, that his affections were unalterably fixed upon her, adverted with tenderness and feeling to her resemblance to her lamented mother; but asserted that her own charming mind and manners, had perfected the attachment, which that likeness had first produced in his heart.

So nobly sincere, so free from all affectation or presumption, was his manner, that Magdalena could not feel otherwise than grateful, for a preference so delicately avowed. To speak, however, she found impossible; and had her heart really consented to his proposal, it is probable, her manner of hearing it would have differed but little from the trembling silence in which she now received it. Joy and Hope seemed to inspire Sir Eustace's heart, and

to illuminate his fine countenance; yet totally free from annoyance, or undue pretension, he thus continued his discourse:

"I know, lovely Magdalena, that the disparity of our years, and many disadvantages on my side, render this proposal, in some degree, unworthy your acceptance. I dwell not for a moment on Lord Ennersdale's prepossession in my favour; nor would I for the world owe yours to the conditional engagements, which, you probably know, he made with me in your infancy. You are free, absolutely free! Do not, I conjure you, deceive yourself or me, by accepting my suit, if the inmost breathings of your heart incline you to reject it! Lord Ennersdale, I know, has entertained many wild and extravagant ideas; he makes your favour to me, the condition of restoring your mother's portrait to its place; and has hinted, that he will never reveal your

father's name, nor many other circumstances, of which he alone is the depositary, unless your are—*My Wife!*—But, delightful as that sound is to my ears and to my heart, rather, much rather would I never hear it than claim you as such, unless your own inclination prompts you to accept the title! To reveal what he knows, I have in vain attempted to persuade him; and my unfortunate absence, at the period when certain affecting events took place kept me unhappily in ignorance of many things, which I might otherwise now be able to ascertain——Horatia!—had, I am sure, no secret, which she would have blushed to deposit in the breast of her faithful Eustace; as a friend she loved me—unhappily I was not contented with that sentiment; and too late she discovered she could not give me more—but the purity of an angel could not be exceeded by that of Horatia Delamere! Oh, cruel Lord En-

nersdale, to leave it in need of defence from me!"

He paused, and a tear from his own eye accompanied those which trickled down Magdalena's cheeks, as she gratefully listened to this honourable declaration of his confidence in her unfortunate mother. After a minute, he thus continued:

"Whether Lord Ennersdale ever will remove the cloud of mystery which hangs, sweet Magdalena, upon your birth, is, in my opinion, of little consequence; let not at least your desire to dispel it, influence you in your acceptance or rejection of my addresses, generously, candidly, tell me if they are disagreeable to you, and they shall be instantly withdrawn."

Oh, how did Magdalena long to unveil her heart, and all its feelings to this excellent man! But she dared not; it was plain he had but imperfect ideas of the power and determination

of Lord Ennersdale; still less of the vengeance he had denounced against her, if she ventured to refuse an alliance on which his heart was set. Silence, though mixed with sighs and trembling, therefore, was her only resource; and from it Sir Eustace seemed, as well he might, to draw inferences the most favourable.

After a short pause, he added, "The seclusion, in which Lord Ennersdale has hitherto, against my judgment, kept his charming ward, has probably prevented her from forming any prepossession in favour of another; but, can I be sure, can I even hope she will always remain ignorant, how many men there are more, far more deserving her approbation than I am? I would owe nothing, Magdalena, to the accident of being the first who has addressed you; the moment you appear in the world, many, doubtless, will select one so attractive, so desirable; many may,

nay, will be far more suitable, far more worthy of your regard, than I am."

"More worthy!" in a low voice, but involuntarily, exclaimed Magdalena; "that cannot be!"

Delighted, as it seemed, he bent in silent gratitude over the hand he held; but, recovering himself, with more composure, added: "Love is capricious; you may hereafter see a man you could prefer to me; I cannot consent to take advantage of your want of knowledge of the world; impatient as I am to call you mine, I will wait till you have had time to look around you. Lady Piercefield hopes for Lord Ennersdale's, and your own, consent to take you to London for the winter; you will there have an opportunity of consulting your own heart, and judging for yourself. Happy, too happy shall I be, if my undeviating attentions, my passionate attachment, may ultimately

obtain your preferable regard; but once more, Magdalena, let me entreat, conjure you, not to deceive yourself and me; should you prefer another, tax my power to the utmost, it shall be exerted to secure your happiness!"

Tears of gratitude and regret fell from Magdalena's eyes; she almost wished she had never seen Montaubrey; that, with her heart and all its affections, she might have repaid the disinterested attachment of Sir Eustace; still more sincerely did she lament, that she dared not place in him the confidence he so well merited.

But considerations the most imperative with-held her; and the excessive agitation of her mind was becoming almost too painful to be endured, when the entrance of Lord Ennersdale, in some degree, relieved her. Joy brightened in his features at seeing them together; and, as he cast a penetrating glance at both, he seemed to read in

their countenances, that the conference had terminated to his wishes. Sir Eustace rose eagerly to receive him; and, with a look of delight, stretched out his hand to meet Lord Ennersdale's, whom he immediately drew towards a distant part of the room, while Magdalena, thankful for his considerate kindness, gladly made her escape, and withdrew to her own apartment.

"It is then all over!" she mentally exclaimed; "I have actually, though tacitly, consented to be the wife of Sir Eustace! Generous, delicate, excellent Sir Eustace! Oh, how little do you know, that the future cannot present to me objects, half so interesting as the past has done; may you never suspect it! Since hope is at an end, oh!—That recollection would also leave me!"

A burst of tears relieved her overcharged heart; the image of Montaubrey lost for ever; and, as it would,

perhaps, appear to him, voluntarily abandoned, arose more vividly to her imagination. She reproached herself for having so easily yielded up the hope of ever being his; of having given Sir Eustace but too much reason to believe, by her silence, when pressed to declare her real sentiments, and by the few words she had spoken, so expressive of approbation of himself, that her acceptance of his proposal was voluntary and unbiassed! Then again she recalled to her mind, all the arguments which had determined her conduct; the impossibility of acting otherwise; and the overwhelming conviction, that had she even resolved to brave the anger of Lord Ennersdale, with all its appalling consequences, she should have been the means of involving Montaubrey in dissentions, the most cruel, with his mother; and consequently the instrument of misery to all.

"I think," she said, "I am in the

path which Duty and Reason point out; I will walk in it, as steadily as this frail and trembling heart will permit me to do, and leave the rest to Heaven!"

Calmed by this determination, and soothed by that complacency, which the certainty of meaning to do right always bestows, she was enabled, with some composure, to meet Lord Ennersdale at dinner. He said but few words on the subject of her conference with Sir Eustace; but his whole manner told her how entirely he approved of, and was pleased with, her conduct; and convinced her, that he considered the manner in which she had listened to him as decidedly favourable; never had he appeared so kind, so conciliating; his heart seemed eased of the deep oppression, which, for years, had overwhelmed its tenderer feelings; he yielded now to his natural disposition, was cheerful and affectionate; and Magda-

lena could not without pleasure contemplate the alteration her own exertions had produced.

"Oh," she thought; "had he but earlier confided to me his views and wishes; taught me from infancy to regard, with the admiration it deserves, the character of the excellent man for whom I was destined, I might have been happy; guarded, by that knowledge, from indulging any other prepossession, I should have wished for no friend, no companion, but himself; I should not have erred; I should not so cruelly suffer for my errors! But, ah! can I really wish never to have known Montaubrey! I fear, I fear, I am not yet so wise!"

The evening brought Henrietta; who, independent and unconstrained, had refused to dine out with the rest of the family; and had walked from West-hay to Delamere to drink tea with Magdalena.

"Victoria," she said, "sent her love to you; but Victoria is not well; she could neither dine out to-day, nor come hither with me. Sir Eustace desired me to take one of the carriages, but I preferred walking; and Victoria was not equal to going out at all."

Magdalena expressed her concern to hear this.

Henrietta shook her head, and said, "I shall hint to my uncle, that the sharp air of Cumberland does not agree with her Asiatic constitution; she *will*, I think, in truth, be better any where else."

She then openly declared her knowledge of the motive of Sir Eustace's visit to Delamere, in the morning—"He has told Mamma," she said; "and permitted her to tell us girls, that his proposals have not been absolutely rejected; and that he has reason to hope, he may in time be successful; but he is afraid, my dear, you may

sometime see a person you could prefer to him; and is determined you shall have leisure to look round. I don't like all this sentimental delicacy; I hope he will not refine away his own happiness; and I must wish for the peace of all parties, that suspence was at an end, and you were to be married immediately."

"Pray, tell me," said Magdalena, with some confusion; "was Lady Piercefield——"

"Oh, my mother behaved like a sensible woman," interrupted Henrietta; "my uncle gave her to understand, yesterday, what he had in contemplation; and told her expressly, that he expected you should be treated with every respect and attention, which, he said, he was convinced, your birth, as well as merit, demanded; when, therefore, he more fully explained himself this morning, my mother, seeing the thing was determined, took her part with a good

grace, and expressed very kind wishes for your mutual happiness. Miss Arlington, pleased or not, will not be consulted.

"*I* am really delighted for every reason but one! Oh, my dear! Victoria——poor Victoria, in spite of my lessons, betrayed herself sadly! I was obliged to carry her off, out of the the way of Mamma's observation, and the cold sneer which began to gather on the lip of Matilda."

Magdalena sighed——"Ah," she thought, "that Sir Eustace would but transfer his affections to this dear, this interesting girl! Did but the rejection of our union come from him, how happy we all might be! Lord Ennersdale, no longer inexorable; Montaubrey recalled! But, vain, vain are these wishes; I must be contented to know.

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we may!"

Lord Ennersdale, always pleased with Henrietta, who was in one of her most sensible and agreeable humours, now joined them; and the conversation turned on more general subjects, till Henrietta rose to depart.

"Lady Piercefield, and Miss Arlington, are coming to-morrow morning," said she, apart to Magdalena; "to pay you a visit in form; and to invite you to West-hay; whither I told them plainly you would not come again, after their behaviour yesterday, till that ceremony had passed. I desire you will look your best, and assume a great deal of dignity; pray, above all things, let Matilda know that you are infinitely her superior. I shall not come with them; I hate form; and you already know how much I, at least, am your friend."

She then kindly shook hands, and was departing; but running back, she whispered to Magdalena, "My mo-

ther has taken it into her head, that now Sir Eustace has positively declared his intentions, (of which it is evident he means to make no secret) etiquette forbids your being an inmate at West-hay; and, indeed, I do not know but the stupid world we live in may fancy the same thing; I tell you this, knowing you have not much studied les usages du monde, for your future guidance; and now, good bye in earnest." She then hastened away, leaving Magdalena charmed with her frankness, and the considerate kindness of her communications.

Lady Piercefield, and Miss Arlington, made their promised visit, the next morning; Magdalena, rousing herself to meet the exigencies of the moment, received them with an air of self-possession, and even of dignity, which seemed to surprise them. She felt conscious, that could but her grandfather be prevailed on to assert her

rights, she was, at least, their equal; and that of the castle, in which she received their visit, she ought to be the acknowledged heiress. These considerations enabled her to conduct herself with a noble gracefulness of manner, which shewed them, she did not consider their notice as a condescension. Lady Piercefield, indeed, did not appear to think it such; she was too properly well-bred not to put every one, with whom she conversed, entirely at their ease; and she returned at once, and apparently without effort, to the same manner she had always displayed to Magdalena, before the visit to Milbank. Miss Arlington seemed to strive to be less cold and stiff than usual; but Magdalena held her in such real contempt, that her assumed civility was even less pleasing to her, than her former distance had been.

Lady Piercefield entreated Lord Ennersdale, and Magdalena, to meet a party and dine at West-hay, the next

day, to which they consented; and something was said of a ball, which Sir Eustace intended to give; and at which, her ladyship hoped, Magdalena would also be present.

To this Lord Ennersdale most gladly acceded; and begged the favour of Lady Piercefield, to order from London, for Magdalena, whatever dress she thought would be most proper for the occasion; he also desired the name of her ladyship's jeweller; and declared his intention of presenting his ward with a set of pearls, "Diamonds, and other gems, of the finest kind," he said; "I have in abundance; but, at present, it strikes me, she is too young to wear them; if your ladyship thinks otherwise, they shall be immediately sent to London to be new set; will you and Miss Arlington oblige me by examining them?"

Both ladies readily complied, though they agreed, that pearls would for the

present be more appropriate for Miss Melrose.

Lord Ennersdale immediately opened a cabinet, which stood in the room, and produced a large casket; which, on being opened, displayed jewels of immense value. "These," he said, "have never been worn since the death of my wife; I was preparing to have them new set —— when ——all my hopes were blasted! I now intend them for Magdalena."

This speech, which seemed, in effect, to avow his intention of declaring her his heiress, seemed to produce a great revolution in the sentiments of Miss Arlington; she admired the beauty and splendour of the jewels; and something, very like envy, seemed fast replacing the contempt, in which she had hitherto affected to hold their intended possessor.

Magdalena could not be insensible, to the pleasure of finding herself thus

almost declared the legal heiress of Lord Ennersdale; and of seeing the first step taken, towards the re-establishment of her mother's fame; for it was scarcely possible to construe the earl's intention of presenting her with the family jewels, in any other light; yet she sighed involuntarily, as she reflected, how great a sacrifice she must make ere her wishes, on that subject, could be accomplished; nor did the lustre of those splendid gems delude her into a belief, that their possession could bestow happiness, or still the anguish of parting for ever with the dearest objects of her heart's affection. To render herself, if ornaments could have done so, more pleasing in the eyes of Reginald, would have been a pleasing task; but to the admiration of all the world besides she felt wholly indifferent. A thousand tender thoughts were springing in her mind, while her eyes seemed fixed on the casket, when her reverie was ended, by Lady Pierce-

field's rising to depart. She took leave of Magdalena with much kindness; and Miss Arlington bade her adieu with considerable politeness; nay, so much had the diamonds, &c. melted of her ice, that she actually extended three fingers, by way of *shaking hands* with Miss Melrose!

On their arrival at West-hay, the next day, Sir Eustace received Lord Ennersdale, and Magdalena, with marked pleasure, and the most pointed attention.

The other guests were not yet arrived; and Magdalena, impatient to see Victoria, enquired if she might be permitted to go to her dressing-room; a request which was immediately granted; and Henrietta willingly accompanied her; "I am glad," she said, "that you should meet without other witnesses than myself; I hope Victoria will behave well; but prepare to see her already altered in her appearance."

As they entered the dressing-room, they saw Victoria leaning on a sopha,

in her morning-dress; and that unusually negligent; her form appeared to have lost all its elasticity, and her arms hung carelessly by her side; she was pale, and her beautiful eyes swimming in misty vapours, and weighed down with langour.

"My love," said Henrietta, "why are you not drest? Here is Magdalena."

At the name of Magdalena, the lovely girl started from her seat; a faint blush, coloured her cheeks, she advanced hastily, exclaiming, "Dear Magdalena, let me thus congratulate you, on prospects ——" then throwing both her arms round Magdalena's neck, she leant her head an instant on her shoulder, gave a deep sigh; and by the sudden relaxation of her grasp, they found she had fainted. Extremely alarmed, Henrietta summoned Johnson from the next room; and with her help they placed Victoria on the sopha.

"Good heavens," whispered Magda-

lena, to Henrietta; "how much I am grieved to see her thus. Oh, that it rested with me, only to ensure her happiness!"

"She revives," said Henrietta; "I feared this would be the case, she has been so languid the last three days."

"Oh, ma'am," said Johnson; "if you did but know how Miss Devereux passes her time, you would not wonder!—No rest; walking up and down her room half the night; such sighs!—such dreadful sighs! They seem perpetually sounding in my ears; worse than she was when the colonel died; and then I thought she would have grieved herself to death; and so I think she would if Sir Eustace had not been so kind to her; that he seemed to replace her poor father! But now, what in the world she has to vex her, I cannot imagine; so happy and lively as she used to be!" "Hush, hush!" said Henrietta; "she is not well; she must

be removed to a milder climate; this keen air does not agree with her."

Magdalena, kneeling by Victoria, could not restrain her tears, which fell on the beautiful, but faded face of Miss Devereux; who, now recovering, opened her eyes, and seeing Magdalena in tears, said, in a low voice, "What! —You weeping, Magdalena!" in a tone which seemed to imply her astonishment, that a being so happy could shed a tear; recollecting herself, however, still farther, she gently raised herself, and said, "Pray, forgive me for alarming you; I have been ill all day; but I am better now; well, quite well! —Is it not time to dress?—You are both dressed I see; I shall not be five minutes." She now hastily attempted to rise; but, weak and trembling, fell back again, and said, with a faint smile, "I will keep quiet a few minutes longer!" "Indeed," said Henrietta; "you are not fit to dress, or to dine below;

let me persuade you, lie down, as soon as we have dined we will come to you, and if you are better, you can go down to tea with us."

"But will it not seem disrespectful? Will not Sir Eustace think——I wished, indeed, to dine below to-day *in particular!* Magdalena, I have not seen you these three or four days; and now you, whom I love so much, and wished so earnestly to see, are here, it appears so strange for me not to come down to dinner!"

Magdalena, in the tenderest manner, entreated her not to exert herself so much; and assured her, she would join her the moment she quitted the dining-room; finding herself at that moment, therefore, really unable to go down, Victoria, at last, consented to remain in her dressing-room.

Sir Eustace's whole manner towards Magdalena, seemed calculated to declare his sentiments towards her; there

was nothing obtrusive, nothing that could distress her in his attention; yet they were so marked, that every guest who dined at West-hay, felt convinced they were those of an acknowledged, and, as it appeared, of an accepted lover. The manner of Lady Piercefield too, corroborated the idea; as she treated Magdalena with a degree of respect, which, so young a girl, under other circumstances, would hardly have excited. The observing eyes, which, every passing moment seemed more and more to fix on Magdalena, became, at last, quite confusing to her; and she was happy to escape with Henrietta to Victoria's apartment, as soon as possible after dinner.

They found Miss Devereux elegantly dressed, and looking more like herself; the colour in her cheeks, indeed, surprised them, after such a fainting; but on looking at her more attentively, Henrietta said, "Rouge! Victoria, I

thought you never wore any!" "Never in my life before," she replied, with a faint smile; "but I really looked so pale, and ghost-like, I thought you would all be frightened; so I made Johnson fetch me your rouge; and hope to captivate instead of terrify some of the beaux. I am so happy, and in such spirits, it would have been a pity to look ill! Dear Magdalena, I thought, was pale in the morning; but she has a fine brilliant colour now; no wonder, I suppose," she added, with a forced appearance of gaiety; "*existing circumstances* have made her 'the observed of all observers!"'

"I hope you have eaten some dinner," said Henrietta, gravely; "to support all these fine spirits!" Victoria made no answer; but Johnson, who stood behind her young lady, shook her head; and made some signs, which Henrietta appeared instantly to understand.

"Laudanum," said she in a low voice, and looking vexed; "I thought so!"

"What, telling tales, Johnson?" said Victoria, turning suddenly round, and laughing; "I see by Henrietta's sage face she has found me out! I took but a very few drops, and for the first time since I came to Westhay; you cannot think how happy it has made me!" "You have done very wrong," said Henrietta; "and you promised me not to do it any more, before we left Arlington-hall!" "I did not, then, know I should have so much occasion for it," returned Victoria; "but do not be angry; I will give you my word not to do it again; nay, you shall take the laudanum into your own keeping, if you please; only this one day let me enjoy myself!" Henrietta again shook her head; and they all went down together; Victoria passed her arm through Magdalena's, and

continued talking incessantly; her rouge, and the means to which she had resorted to support her factitious spirits, gave her eyes their wonted brilliancy; and Lady Piercefield was delighted to see her once more so much herself; even Magdalena could scarcely believe, that her vivacity was affected; so easily did she support the appearance of happiness, and so readily was her wit exerted on every occasion. The ladies, according to the custom of West-hay, had taken their coffee at the dining-table; but Victoria not having been there, some was immediately brought for her, into the drawing-room; she drank two or three cups very strong, and without eating; and her spirits became still more exhilarated; she laughed at Henrietta for looking so grave; and said a thousand things, in a low voice, to Magdalena, referring to her engagements with Sir Eustace, in so easy a manner, as led her almost to

suppose, she had really misconstrued Victoria's feelings respecting him. She entered into a lively conversation with two or three of the young ladies present, to whom she related, with her usual grace and animation, several anecdotes, illustrative of the manners of India; mingling a thousand lively sallies of wit, which made them laugh heartily. She was standing with her little audience round her, holding by Magdalena's arm, when the gentleman entered the room. Sir Eustace instantly walked towards the young ladies; the moment Victoria saw him approach, the hand, which leant on Magdalena's arm, seemed suddenly convulsed, and became as cold as ice; her voice faltered, and a universal trembling seized her. Magdalena looked at her; and saw through the rouge, that she had turned extremely pale; but Sir Eustace spoke to her, and a brighter flush than ever coloured

her cheeks; he took her disengaged hand, and said he was happy to see her look so well; he then took Magdalena's hand also, and joining them within both his own, seemed going to say something farther, but Victoria snatched away her hands, exclaiming, "oh, this odious ring; how it hurts me!" she hastily pulled off a ring she had on one of her fingers; Lord Charles, who had followed Sir Eustace, attempted to take it from her, in a laughing, playful manner; she commenced a very lively conversation with him, and turning from the rest of the party, they sat down on a sopha, at a little distance; whither she was immediately followed by two or three gentlemen, with whom she kept up a sort of rattling dialogue; scarcely speaking to any one else for the rest of the evening.

"Is not Miss Devereux very capricious, and a great flirt?" asked Miss Parry, of Magdalena; and indeed her

conduct was such as might well warrant the question! How often probably, nay, certainly, are such manners assumed to veil an aching heart!

Henrietta and Magdalena conferred a good deal about her; Henrietta exprest her fears, that all this assumed levity would end in a fit of illness; and before the conclusion of the evening, her prediction began to be verified. Victoria became so feverish and hysterical, that they were obliged to remove her to her own apartment; and claim the professional aid of Doctor Parry; he ordered her to be kept perfectly quiet; and acknowledged his apprehensions, that a violent fever was approaching. The event proved his judgment to be but too correct; for three days fever, accompanied with delirium, threatened the life of Victoria, Henrietta established herself by her bed-side; and Magdalena would gladly have done the same, but she felt, with

Lady Piercefield, the impropriety of being an inmate under the roof of Sir Eustace. She visited West-hay, however, for some hours every day; and in every lucid interval Victoria seemed gratified, by seeing Magdalena near her. In her delirium, indeed, she sometimes reproached her with unkindness, and with having been the cause of her misery; sometimes she fancied herself enwreathed by one of those enormous snakes she had often seen in India. "It is you," she would exclaim; "you cruel Magdalena, who have fastened it to my heart; see, how it tears, how it devours me!—Take it away!—Oh, take it away!——hark——what does she say?—Is it true, Henrietta, that if this horrid reptile ceases to prey on me, it will torture Sir Eustace?—Oh, dearest Magdalena; leave it then, leave it to destroy me!"

A thousand passionate, and pathetic appeals she would make to her father;

entreat him to come and take her from a country, whither she had only come to be miserable.

"You used to love me," she cried; "you used to say, no one should injure Victoria! That the whole world should combine to make her happy; that all your wealth should be lavished to procure her felicity; but wealth, alas, my father, wealth cannot purchase happiness!"—"Too true, alas!" whispered Henrietta, to Magdalena, who stood weeping, while the distracted Victoria thus raved; "and to this unbounded love and indulgence, we may trace Victoria's present misery; perhaps her fatal termination!—All that wealth could supply, all that the fondest affection could procure, have, through life, been the lot of Victoria; hardly suffered to form a wish before it was gratified; always told, as she so affectingly says, that the whole world should combine to make her happy; praised,

courted, and admired, from her earliest infancy; all power of withstanding her passions, of enduring disappointment, has been with-held. With a temper naturally sweet, with a heart the seat of every generous sentiment, of every tender affection, Victoria was suffered to be too often assuming and severe; and her wit was praised, though it sometimes amounted to insolence. My uncle has done much to soften the unpleasant shades, which Victoria's character displayed, when we first knew her; but, alas, the softness and tenderness, with which his lessons were given, have too deeply affected her feeling heart; and she re-pays with her happiness, if not with her life, the improvement her sense of his superiority wrought in her conduct."

Magdalena heard all this with the deepest regret; Henrietta, however, gave her no encouragement to suppose, that any thing that could be done to

alter the present state of affairs; and, in fact, she felt herself so enslaved, by the strange circumstances of her fate, that she dared not attempt what, had her own happiness alone been at stake, she certainly would have endeavoured to do, for the suffering Victoria.

At the end of a few days, Miss Devereux's fever left her; but so extremely weak and languid, that she was, for a fortnight longer, unable to quit her room; and even, then, the symptoms which hung about her alarmed Doctor Parry; and he suggested the propriety of her being removed, as soon as possible, to a milder climate; and recommended Clifton. Lady Piercefield proposed, that a house should be taken, and they should all remove thither; but Henrietta convinced, that absence, both from Sir Eustace and Magdalena, were absolutely necessary, opposed this measure, so successfully, that it was determinded she alone should ac-

company Victoria. A widowed sister, of the late Lord Piercefield's, lived in the immediate vicinity of the Hotwells; and to her Lady Piercefield wrote, to request she would receive the young ladies; and Mrs. Fairfax, who had prolonged her visit at West-bay, beyond her first intentions, undertook, with pleasure, to chaperon them, as far as Bath, whither she was going. As soon, therefore, as Victoria's strength would permit they set out. Sir Eustace accompanying them the first stage of their journey: an attention which all Henrietta's management could not prevent him from paying.

END OF VOL. II.

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